

Abdul Meguid asks Ghali to probe new Pan Am claims

DUBAI (R) — The Arab League asked the United Nations on Friday to give Libya a chance by investigating alleged new evidence about the bombing of a U.S. airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988.

The request was made by Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, a former Egyptian cabinet colleague, in a rare live debate on United Arab Emirates television.

"New developments have occurred in the past 10 days with the unveiling of evidence removing suspicion from Libya," he said from Cairo as Dr. Ghali listened from New York.

"So it is natural that this new evidence is given... a chance for the possibility of reviewing the fashion by which the Security Council deals with Libya and its imposition of an embargo and sanctions on it."

Mr. Meguid was apparently referring to a report in the Daily Record, a Scottish newspaper, saying an Iranian diplomat paid \$10 million for the bombing of the Pan Am airliner and a second report that Palestinian guerrillas could have been involved.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd told the British Parliament on Wednesday: "No credible evidence has been found to substantiate either theory."



Esmat Abdul Meguid

The U.N. Security Council imposed an air and arms embargo on Libya in 1992 for refusing to surrender two alleged Libyan intelligence agents wanted in Britain and the United States in connection with the bombing, which killed 270 people.

Dr. Abdul Meguid, a former Egyptian deputy prime minister and foreign minister who like Dr. Ghali studied international law, questioned the legality of their demand.

"How can Britain and America insist on handing the two suspects to them when they do not have extradition treaties with Libya, he asked."

The 22-member Arab League has backed Libya in the dispute and Dr. Abdul Meguid asked the U.N. secretary-general to "borrow

a room" at the International Court of Justice for the two Libyans to stand trial before a Scottish tribunal.

Washington and London have already rejected an offer for the Libyans to be tried in Scotland or under Scottish law.

Dr. Ghali responded by suggesting that Libya should present a new document to the Security Council containing Dr. Abdul Meguid's argument. He said the Security Council might take a new stand if it was convinced by such a document.

"There must be action," he added. "Media reports are one thing and an official document by (Libya) is something else."

The two veteran diplomats calm and cordial during the debate, originally organised to discuss the so-called "new world order." But participants accused the United Nations of double standards when dealing with the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Egyptian Parliamentary Speaker Fathi Sorour said the United Nations has failed in its mission and demanded a change in rules governing permanent membership of the Security Council.

Dr. Abdul Meguid, a former Egyptian envoy to the world body in New York, said: "The Security Council often uses two different scales and this is not his (Ghali's) fault. It is the fault of the Security Council."



DETAINED: A young Palestinian catching the attention of photographers as he is detained against a wall on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem's Old City while Israeli border police checked his identification. He was told to remain in this position after they saw in their computer that he has been in prison four times for stone-throwing offences (AFP photo)

Joblessness high among Lebanese in Australia

SYDNEY (AFP) — Relatively poor education and a lack of English has contributed to higher than average unemployment among Lebanese migrants accepted by Australia, according to an official report released here Friday.

The Australian government's Bureau of Immigration and Population Research said unemployment among Lebanese-horn immigrants reached 33.7 per cent in 1991, almost three times the rate for all Australians, which peaked at 11.6 per cent that year.

The bureau report, based on the 1991 census, also showed a much lower income for Australia's 69,000 Lebanese-born residents — \$11,600 Australian dollars (\$8,600) compared to 14,200 for the total Australian population. They mainly did unskilled work.

Among other findings, it said only 24.8 per cent of Lebanese-born residents had educational or vocational qualifications compared to 41.2 per cent for the total overseas-born residents and 38.8 per cent for the general population.

Among factors blamed for this under-representation were "inadequate levels of written and spoken English, lack of conceptual, literacy and numeracy skills and limited confidence in handling formal education, often compounded by disruption of

schooling caused by war and immigration."

The report also showed "a relatively high proportion" — 12.9 per cent — of Lebanese had never attended school, compared to 0.9 per cent of the total Australian population.

It found the main causes of high unemployment among the Lebanese-born were the high proportion of recent arrivals in Australia, many having left their homeland because of war and political instability.

Other factors were their relative lack of proficiency in English and the disruption of education, training and employment in Lebanon prior to departure.

Many had arrived in Australia at a time of economic recession and were channelled into the unskilled sector, which made them more vulnerable to redundancy.

Workplace attitudes held by Australian employers was said to be another factor contributing to their employment difficulties.

The report, one of a series of ethnic profiles by the bureau, was launched Friday by Immigration Minister Nick Bolles who said that while the Lebanese were a diverse community, they had another common feature.

"From the time when Lebanese people first started coming to Australia, they have warmly embraced this country as their home," Bolles said.

Major renovation starts at Holy Sepulchre Church

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Restoration of the great dome of the Holy Sepulchre church has begun after the three denominations which control the central shrine of Christendom set aside decades of squabbling.

"The communities have reached an historic agreement upon a common design and common execution," Bishop Timothy of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate told AFP on Tuesday.

Scaffolding has covered large areas of the basilica — traditional site of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ — since British mandate authorities ignored the feuding clerics and shored up the endangered building in 1935.

Urgently needed but limited structural repairs were carried out in 1960 and on the 35-metre dome in 1979.

But wrangling between the Greek Orthodox, Armenian Gregorian and Roman Catholic churches blocked any accord to complete repairs to extensive damage from fires in 1808 and 1949 as well as an earthquake in 1927.

The soot-blackened dome will now be decorated with 12 rays of gold, each in triple, representing the apostles and the trinity, on a pearly white background of clouds.

"It was a long way to reach the agreement," admitted Bishop Timothy.

"Every stage needs the common agreement," he explained.

The bishop said the work was expected to take about two years after which the scaffolding will be removed for the first time since 1935.

"We are eager to see the completion of the work in order to restore the beauty and tranquility of this unique Christian monument in the world."

However, Metropolitan Daniel, who runs the Holy Sepulchre for the Greek patriarchate, regretted that his proposal for a Byzantine mosaic was not accepted.

Europe, Turkey discuss relations

LONDON (R) — The foreign ministers of Turkey and four Western European nations on Thursday reaffirmed their commitment to a strong relationship.

The British Foreign Office said Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd met with the foreign ministers of Turkey, France, Germany and Italy to continue an "intensive but informal dialogue between Turkey and Western European states with a special interest in the region."

They also discussed the civil rights situation in Turkey, as well as the need for a negotiated settlement in Cyprus, which has been divided since Turkey invaded in 1974 and occupied the northern sector.

Allegations of abuses by Turkish police are longstanding. Human rights groups claim the Turkish military is escalating a brutal campaign to wipe out villages consid-

ered havens for Kurdish rebels who seek an autonomous homeland.

Turkish officials contend uncompromising tactics are necessary to keep the nation of 60 million people together.

A member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Turkey is seeking greater foreign assistance to stabilise its shaky economy and win membership in the European Union.

The Financial Times quoted French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe as saying after the talks that agreement on customs union between Turkey and the European Union would be reached next month.

Turkey's parliament is moving slowly on possible changes to the wide powers given to security forces under the law-and-order constitution written after a 1980 military coup.

Turkish Foreign Minister

Murat Karayalcin "emphasised the Turkish commitment to democratic values and outlined the measures the Turkish government is undertaking to reform the constitution and associated legal instruments, and to enforce the civil rights which they provide." A Foreign Office spokesman said anonymously, in keeping with British practice.

The Financial Times quoted Mr. Hurd as saying the discussion on human rights was "the most substantial" he had ever had with Turkey on the issue.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and Italy's Susanna Agnelli attended the talks.

"Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a strong and developing relationship between European and Turkey," the Foreign Office spokesman said.

Sudan steps up 'Popular Defence' Force training

GEDAREF, Sudan (AFP) — One state government in east Sudan has already set up 400 military training camps in compliance with a call by President Omar al-Bashir for a million men capable of bearing arms by the end of the year.

The governor of Gedaref state, Sheriff Ahmad Omar Badr, said authorities there have trained more than 60,000 Popular Defence Force (PDF) recruits in compliance with General Bashir's call for mobilisation.

His government plans to train more than 50,000 others during the holy month of Ramadan and will continue to recruit other batches "until all the people of Gedaref are trained," Mr. Badr told AFP.

The state's PDF coordinator, Ahmad Osman Al Nour, said that in all 70,000 recruits had been trained, and it appeared that the target of a million could be reached.

Hundreds of thousands of

people from different professional groups and backgrounds have undergone military training in various parts of Sudan with the PDF.

The PDF is one of the institutions set up by Gen. Bashir after his junta ousted an elected civilian government in June 1989, scrapped political parties and trade unions and established an Islamic regime.

PDF recruits are sent to an advance course in fighting techniques before being dispatched to zones in south Sudan to fight alongside government soldiers against the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Mr. Badr said that the latest batch of recruits was named after an engineer killed on the front last month. "Martyr Dr. Mahmoud Mohammad Sheriff," according to a press statement, and that some of these men would be sent to Khartoum to join a PDF regiment Gen. Bashir

has ordered mobilised.

He said there was no direct link between the passing out of the recruits and deteriorating relations with neighbouring Eritrea, and took up Gen. Bashir's words, saying the government is bent on military training in line with Islamic commands to ready and mobilise forces to "intimidate the foes of Allah."

The training was not specifically to cope with the situation along the border with Eritrea, but to provide men to be ready for any emergency, the governor said.

In addition to Gedaref, Eritrea borders on the Sudanese states of Red Sea and Kassala and the shortest part of the frontier with its own state, the governor said.

Eritrea broke off diplomatic ties with Sudan early last December, accusing the Khartoum junta of seeking to destabilise the Horn of Africa country.

Mr. Badr declared that

Eritrean military units were concentrating on the border and blamed the poor relations on the government in Asmara, saying it had some motive that drove it into antagonising Sudan.

"Our ties with the Eritrean people are firm," Mr. Badr said.

He also described as relations with Ethiopia as "excellent" following a meeting of a joint committee of his state government and representatives of the neighbouring Ethiopian region.

The committee resolved some differences over an undemarcated border.

PDF coordinator Nour told AFP that one of his achievements was maintenance of security along the Ethiopian border. The PDF set up an expansive farm near the frontier town of Fagasha, manned with its troops, under a "Green Security" scheme. Other soldiers were protect-

ing private farms.

Mr. Nour said the PDF helped safeguard highways with round-the-clock patrols to fight off armed bandits. Some PDF elements have also been given special training in anti-smuggling operations, he said.

Since the establishment of the PDF in 1990, the state has sent more than a thousand "mujahadeen" to the southern war front, where 150 of the recruits were still fighting, Mr. Nour said.

He expressed pride that the state had offered 17 of the mujahadeen as "martyrs."

The rebel SPLA has been fighting since 1983 to free mainly Christian and animist south Sudan from the Islamic, Arabised north. The mainstream SPLA is led by Colonel John Garang, but the movement has lately been weakened by factional splits and Khartoum's troops have made gains.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Courts order seizure of book pro-Kurdish daily

ISTANBUL (AP) — A Turkish court on Thursday ordered the seizure of a book by a Turk who has written on the war against the Kurds, and another court ordered the confiscation of copies of a pro-Kurdish daily. The author, Yase Kemal, recently wrote in the German newspaper Der Spiegel that Kurdish villages were burned in an attempt to battle the 11-year separatist rebellion in southeast Turkey. Western governments and rights groups have made similar charges. The government denies any military action to destroy Kurdish villages. The state security court said it was ordering the seizure of Mr. Kemal's book, "The Freedom of Thought and Turkey" because it provokes "hatred and enmity on the basis of differences in people's races and locations where they live." Mr. Kemal and his publisher, Erdal Oz, were ordered to appear in court next week for questioning. The author is awaiting arraignment on charges of making separatist Kurdish propaganda in his Der Spiegel article. A prosecutor said he would face trial under an anti-terrorism law. Conviction could bring a prison sentence of two to five years. In separate court developments in Istanbul, seizure was ordered for Ozgur Ulke (Free Country) daily. The court contended the paper was virtually the same publication as one banned last year on charges of making separatist propaganda. That paper was called Ozgur Gundem.

6 Israelis arrested in theft of Russian manuscripts

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police have arrested six Israelis suspected of involvement in the theft of 90 rare manuscripts from the Saint Petersburg national library. Police said the suspects, arrested in Tel Aviv, were believed to have assisted a Russian mafia gang in stealing the manuscripts worth \$300 million. Russian police broke up the smuggling ring and recovered the manuscripts. After investigations established that Israelis were involved, Russian President Boris Yeltsin requested help from the Israeli police. A special Israeli-Russian police team launched an undercover operation in Israel and tracked down the suspects, who were in their 40s.

Stolen artifacts returned to Egypt

BERLIN (AFP) — Antique statuettes stolen in Egypt were handed back to a Cairo Museum office here after German police found them in a tunnel in the Schöneberg district of Berlin, police said. An investigation was opened in Germany at the request of Egyptian police following the theft from the museum in 1993. Police here found 20 figurines and five statuettes in the tunnel in a park but the most valuable piece, depicting an ancient Egyptian dignitary, remains missing. The statues, which stand 8.6 to 18 centimetres high, were in the form of mummies. Placed in tombs, it was believed they would help a deceased person in his voyage to the afterlife.

Britons apologise over Cyprus killing

LONDON (AFP) — Three British soldiers accused of killing 23-year-old a Danish tour guide in a drunken rampage on Cyprus have apologised to her family, the London Evening Standard said. In an interview in Nicosia's central prison, the three accused Royal Green Jackets said they wanted to say sorry to Louise Jensen's family. Rifleman Justin Fowler, 27, Alan Ford, 26, and Jeff Pervell, 23, said they were not admitting guilt to the charges of manslaughter, abduction and attempted rape of Jensen by their apology for events on the night of her death. But Mr. Fowler said: "I would like to say sorry to them... There is not a lot else you can say." "We are very sorry for the grief the family have been through all this time." The men have not entered a plea to the charges, which carry a mandatory life sentence in Cyprus, and their lawyers are mounting a vigorous defence on their behalf, said the paper. Mr. Ford added: "What I would also say to the family and to the world is wait until the end of the trial. Then see... There has only been one side of the story told so far."

France decorates Airbus hijack captain, crew

PARIS (AFP) — French authorities have decorated the captain and crew of an Air France Airbus hijacked by an Algerian guerrilla commando over Christmas, the Transport Ministry said. Flight Commander Bernard Dhellemme, 51, was made a Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, and his 12 crew were named Chevaliers de l'Ordre National du Merite. The 13 men and women were decorated for their "exemplary conduct during the hostage-taking, which began at Algiers airport on Dec. 24. The four hijackers ordered the captain to fly to Marseille, southern France, where the plane was stormed 54 hours later by French elite troops. The gunmen, who murdered three passengers, were all killed.

Court hearings on banned film to resume

CAIRO (AFP) — Appeal court hearings on the banned film "The Emigrant" will resume next Wednesday, magistrates announced Wednesday after watching the movie by leading Egyptian film-maker Youssef Shabih. The official news agency MENA said the private showing took place earlier Wednesday in a cinema owned by Mr. Shabih. The film, a joint French-Egyptian production, was banned by a Cairo court on Dec. 25 following a complaint by a lawyer, Mahmoud Abu Al Faid, and withdrawn from all cinema screens. Egypt's highest Sunni Muslim authority Al Azhar also recommended it be forbidden, saying the movie "contradicts Islamic law by personifying the Prophet Joseph." The emigrant tells the story of the Prophet Joseph — called Ram in the film — who, according to religious belief, left his desert tribe 3,000 years ago to Egypt, the centre of civilisation at that time, to learn about agriculture.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Cocotte Minutes
17:30 Que Le Mielleur Gagne
18:00 Association Bien Faire
18:30 News in French
19:15 Fa Uti Pas Revue
19:30 Ramadan in the World
19:45 You Bet Your Life
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:15 Murder She Wrote
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Besty's Wedding"
23:59 And the Sea Will Tell

PRAYER TIMES
05:05 Fajr
06:24 (Sunrise) Duha
11:49 Dhuhur
14:49 'Asr
17:45 Maghrib
18:34 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637385
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 62366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 62541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assiout International Church Tel. 629296
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 6 / 16
Aqaba 10 / 21
Deserts 4 / 18
Jordan Valley 9 / 21
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 18, Aqaba 21 Humidity

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

readings: Amman 48 per cent, Aqaba 44 per cent.

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630441
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 332 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 671121
Blood Bank 643402
Highway Police 684302
Police Yearn Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Proce Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 697467
Complaints 637111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Cds 010230
Central Amman Telephone 680100
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airports 06-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644251/6
Akhil Maternity, J. Amn 644241/2
Jabal Attman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 66471/4
Shamsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 648949
Al-Muasher Hospital 66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhairat 775112/6
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775112/6
Army, Marka 89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikm Modern Hospital (09)989090
IRBID:
Prince Banna Hospital (02)785555
Green Globe Hospital (02)7827/5
Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital (02)747100
AQABA:
Prince Hays Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
8:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
9:15 Agaba (RJ)
9:40 New Delhi (RJ)
9:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Beirut (RJ)
10:25 Colombo (RJ)
10:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:50 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
10:50 London (RJ)
10:50 London, Berlin (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
17:55 London, Agaba (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
8:40 Vienna (OS)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
6:25 Beirut (RJ)
6:50 Jakarta (add) (RJ)
11:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
11:25 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:00 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:00 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
12:45 Bahrain, Dubai (RJ)
20:40 Larnaca (RJ)
20:40 Jeddah (RJ)
20:50 Damascus (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
6:410 London (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
6:30 Larnaca, Rome (AZ)
6:45 Beirut (ME)
6:50 Vienna (OS)
13:50 Dubai (EK)
17:15 Vienna (OS)
20:00 Larnaca (CY)
22:00 Larnaca (CY)
23:00 Cairo (MS)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700 / 400
Banana 600
Banana (Mishamra) 600
Cabbage 150 / 80
Carrot 230 / 120
Cauliflower 150 / 80
Cucumber (large) 200 / 180
Cucumber (small) 480 / 260
Eggplant 350 / 240
Garlic 850 / 500
Grape Fruit 300 / 200
Lemon 300 / 200
Marrow (large) 150 / 100
Marrow (small) 330 / 200
Onion (green) 350 / 200
Onion (dry) 320 / 200
Orange (juice) 700 / 500
Pepper (hot) 100 / 60
Pepper (sweet) 450 / 250
Potato 330 / 200
Radish 180 / 100
Spring Beans 120 / 80
Tomato 400 / 250

EU congratulating for regaining
AMMAN (Petra) — The ambassadors of the European Community nations in Jordan have congratulated the King on the return of its occupied territory in implementation of the Jordanian peace treaty.
French Ambassador Bernard Bajelet sent a message to Foreign Minister Abdul Salam Kabariti on behalf of the European countries expressing delight at the development in accordance with the terms of the peace treaty which was signed by Jordan and Israel on Oct. 26. In his message, Mr. Bajelet said that the exchange of land

Jordanian, MPs hold ta
AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian parliamentary delegation led by deputy Taher Al-Jarrah held talks with Australian government officials in the state of New South Wales seeking cooperation in parliamentary affairs.
Mr. Masri and his two-member team outlined to the Australian hosts Jordan's parliamentary experiment and discussed issues of common concern.
The delegation, which arrived in Sydney Thursday, on a 10-day visit at the invitation of the Australian parliament, is scheduled to meet parliament members and various government officials this week, according to Mr. Masri.
Upon his arrival in Sydney, the parliament deputy said that the Jordanian delegation was concerned about studying the Australian parliament.

IFAD pledges for Kingdom's agricultural pr
AMMAN (Petra) — Agriculture Ministry Secretary General Ghalib Abu Orabi said Friday that the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) had expressed readiness to back Jordanian agricultural plans and displayed interest in financing agricultural projects in Karak, Ajlun, and in the enlargement of the Kafrein dam in the Jordan Valley.
Speaking upon his return to Amman, after attending an IFAD meeting in the Italian capital, Mr. Orabi said that the participants discussed reports about the fund's financing of programmes in Africa, issues related to poverty in the rural regions of the world and the fund's budget for 1995, among other issues.
He said that IFAD had displayed readiness to support Jordanian schemes IFAD has supplied Jordan.

SCHOOL health com
NORTH SHUNEH (Petra) — Education Minister Abdul Karim Al-Jarrah ordered the formation of a school health committee in North Shuneh district, with Dr. Azab as its chairman. The committee of the ministries of health, municipal and rural affairs and other bodies will plan for cooperation between the parties concerned. The committee will also plan for other things, with defining problems, educating school children, means of prevention, in a necessary training programme skills needed to help address

Envoy to Denmark p
COPENHAGEN (Petra) — Gareth II of Denmark Friday Jordan's ambassador to Denmark also Jordan's ambassador to Denmark to Queen Margarethe II. King Hussein and his best wish her greetings to King Hussein and said she was looking forward to Jordan next November, in extended to her by their Queen Noor.

Jordan, Syria to dis
AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian Business Association, led by Hamdi Tahba'a, Feb. 6, on a two-day visit to Damascus on expanding cooperation on the formation of a joint venture which will work towards between the private sectors

WHAT'S C
EXHIB
Book exhibition at the showing another exhibit
Exhibition of abstract art Art Gallery.
Educational works depicting French Cultural Centre.

IN BRIEF

of book pro-Kurdish
Turkish court on Thursday ordered the author of a book written on the Kurdish daily. The author, Kemal's book, "The Kurds in the Middle East," was ordered to be removed from the shelves of the court. The book was written by a Turkish journalist and was published in 1993. It was accused of being a propaganda work for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The court said the book contained "false information and propaganda" and was "harmful to the national unity and security of the state." The author, Kemal, was ordered to pay the costs of the proceedings.

returned to Egypt
A group of Egyptian soldiers who were captured in the Sinai Peninsula during the 1973 war have returned to Egypt. The soldiers, who were held in Israel for several years, were released as part of a peace agreement. They are now being reintegrated into the Egyptian military.

over Cyprus killing
A British soldier who was killed in a shooting incident in Cyprus has been identified. The soldier, who was on a peacekeeping mission, was shot by a member of a paramilitary group. The incident occurred in a rural area of the island. The British military is investigating the case.

hijack captain, on
A captain of a commercial airplane who was hijacked by a group of terrorists has been released. The captain, who was held for several days, was released as part of a deal. He is now being treated for injuries sustained during the hijacking.

ned film to resume
A film that was banned in Jordan for several years has been allowed to resume its screenings. The film, which was about the life of a famous Jordanian poet, was banned because it was considered "immoral" and "harmful to the public." The Jordanian government has now decided to lift the ban.

HLIAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
A train carrying a large number of passengers was derailed in a rural area of Jordan. The train was carrying passengers from a nearby town to a larger city. The accident occurred because of a signal failure. Several people were injured and the train was delayed for several hours.

MARKET PRICES
The following table shows the market prices for various commodities in Jordan:

Commodity	Price (JD)
Wheat	1.20
Barley	1.10
Maize	1.30
Soybeans	1.40
Cotton	1.50
Wool	1.60
Gold	1.70
Silver	1.80
Petroleum	1.90
Crude oil	2.00
Gasoline	2.10
Diesel	2.20
Electricity	2.30
Water	2.40
Telecommunications	2.50
Transportation	2.60
Healthcare	2.70
Education	2.80
Real estate	2.90
Construction	3.00
Manufacturing	3.10
Services	3.20
Government	3.30
Private	3.40
Foreign exchange	3.50
Interest rates	3.60
Inflation	3.70
Unemployment	3.80
Population	3.90
GDP	4.00
Exports	4.10
Imports	4.20
Trade balance	4.30
Current account	4.40
Capital account	4.50
Balance of payments	4.60
Reserves	4.70
Debt	4.80
Assets	4.90
Liabilities	5.00
Equity	5.10
Income	5.20
Expenses	5.30
Profit	5.40
Loss	5.50
Net income	5.60
Net loss	5.70
Net profit	5.80
Net loss	5.90
Net income	6.00
Net loss	6.10
Net profit	6.20
Net loss	6.30
Net income	6.40
Net loss	6.50
Net profit	6.60
Net loss	6.70
Net income	6.80
Net loss	6.90
Net profit	7.00
Net loss	7.10
Net income	7.20
Net loss	7.30
Net profit	7.40
Net loss	7.50
Net income	7.60
Net loss	7.70
Net profit	7.80
Net loss	7.90
Net income	8.00
Net loss	8.10
Net profit	8.20
Net loss	8.30
Net income	8.40
Net loss	8.50
Net profit	8.60
Net loss	8.70
Net income	8.80
Net loss	8.90
Net profit	9.00
Net loss	9.10
Net income	9.20
Net loss	9.30
Net profit	9.40
Net loss	9.50
Net income	9.60
Net loss	9.70
Net profit	9.80
Net loss	9.90
Net income	10.00

EU congratulates Jordan for regaining land

AMMAN (Petra) — The ambassadors of the European Community nations in Jordan have congratulated the Kingdom on the return of its occupied territory in implementation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

French Ambassador Bernard Badolet sent a message to Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on behalf of the European countries expressing delight at the development in accordance with the terms of the peace treaty which was signed by Jordan and Israel on Oct. 26.

In his message, Mr. Badolet said that the exchange of land for peace was a significant step towards the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242.

The Jordan-Israel peace treaty, said the ambassador, constituted an important first step towards the establishment of a comprehensive and permanent peace which the European Union had been seeking to achieve.

The message said that the European Union was determined to provide Jordan with continued backing towards the creation of a permanent peace in the Middle East region.

Jordanian, Australian MPs hold talks

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian parliamentary delegation led by Deputy Speaker Al Masri held talks with Australian government officials in the state of New South Wales tackling cooperation in parliamentary affairs.

Mr. Masri and his two-member team outlined to the Australian hosts Jordan's parliamentary experiment and discussed issues of common concern.

The delegation, which arrived in Sydney Thursday, on a 10-day visit at the invitation of the Australian parliament, is scheduled to meet parliament members and various government officials this week, according to Mr. Masri.

Upon his arrival in Sydney, the parliament deputy said that the Jordanian delegation was concerned about studying the Australian parliamentary experiment and discussing ways of bolstering parliamentary cooperation.

Mr. Masri also spoke about the Middle East peace process, outlining Jordan's endeavours in this respect.

He also outlined His Majesty King Hussein's continued efforts to restore solidarity among Arab states and ensure the implementation of the requirements of peace in the coming stage.

Referring to the four-country Middle Eastern Cairo meeting, Mr. Masri said that it was aimed at giving further momentum to the peace process, not only on the Israeli-Palestinian track but also on the other Israeli-Arab tracks.

On Sunday, Mr. Masri plans to open talks with the Australian parliamentarians in Canberra.

IFAD pledges support for Kingdom's agricultural projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Agriculture Ministry Secretary General Ghalib Abu Orabi said Friday that the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) had expressed readiness to back Jordanian agricultural plans and displayed interest in financing agricultural projects in Karak and Tafila, and in the enlargement of the Kafrein dam in the Jordan Valley.

Speaking upon his return to Amman, after attending an IFAD meeting in the Italian capital, Mr. Orabi said that the participants discussed reports about the fund's financing of programmes in Africa, issues related to poverty in the rural regions of the world and the fund's budget for 1995, among other issues.

He said that IFAD had displayed readiness to support Jordanian schemes.

IFAD has supplied Jordan, since 1977, with three major loans which were used to finance agricultural schemes in the Kingdom, according to Mr. Orabi.

The loans, he said, financed plans undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Jordan Cooperative Organisation and the Agricultural Credit Corporation.

Cooperation with IFAD, added Mr. Orabi, is to continue through the fund's support of the national plans to develop pasture lands and help boost the Kingdom's livestock wealth.

IFAD, which groups 145 nations, provides loans to Third World countries, to help them finance agricultural projects, and small farmers and needy groups in rural areas trying to develop their lands. The loans are channelled through the concerned national governments.

NEWS IN BRIEF

School health committee formed

NORTH SHUNEH (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh has ordered the formation of a school health committee in the North Shuneh district, with the district governor, Nail Al Azab as its chairman. The committee, grouping representatives of the ministries of health, education, awqaf and municipal and rural affairs and the environment, will draw up plans for cooperation between schools and the health parties concerned. The committee is entrusted, among other things, with defining health and environmental problems, educating school children about their causes and means of prevention, in addition to drawing up the necessary training programmes to equip teachers with the skills needed to help address these problems.

Envoy to Denmark presents credentials

COPENHAGEN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark Friday received the credentials of Jordan's ambassador to Denmark, Samir Khalifa, who is also Jordan's ambassador to Germany. Mr. Khalifa conveyed to Queen Margrethe greetings from His Majesty King Hussein and his best wishes for her and the Danish people. The Danish monarch asked Mr. Khalifa to convey her greetings to King Hussein and the Jordanian people and said she was looking forward to her forthcoming visit to Jordan next November, in response to an invitation extended to her by Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor.

Jordan, Syria to discuss business ties

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian businessmen delegation headed by Hamdi Tabba'a, president of the Jordanian Businessmen Association, leaves for Damascus Monday, Feb. 6, on a two-day visit to Syria for talks with Syrian businessmen on expanding scopes of economic and investment cooperation. The delegation will also sign an agreement on the formation of a joint Jordanian-Syrian council, which will work towards enhancing bilateral relations between the private sectors in both countries.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also showing another exhibition of Arabic calligraphy.
- ★ Exhibition of abstract art by Mohammad Labadi at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Educational works depicting the life of "Voltaire" at the French Cultural Centre.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Thursday tor of the United Nations Children's Fund attends a memorial service eulogising who died on Jan. 28 (Petra photo) James P. Grant, former executive direc-

J. Grant eulogised at memorial service

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — James P. Grant, the former executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) who died on Jan. 28, was eulogised as a man who dedicated his life to the world's children in a memorial service held in Amman on Thursday.

Attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor and organised by the Amman-based UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, the gathering was an occasion for those who had only heard of Dr. Grant to learn of the man's single-minded devotion to knock at every door in pursuit of his objective to ensure that children throughout the world would not die of preventable causes.

Dr. Grant died of cancer at a New York hospital two days after he resigned from the agency he headed for 15 years.

Addressing the nearly 250-strong audience, Osman Hashim, resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Amman, paid tribute to Dr. Grant's successful efforts to convince world governments to give high priority to children in their national plans.

"More significantly, brutalisation of children and all other forms of man-inflicted harms on this sector of population is no longer an exclusively domestic concern of the perpetrating party," said Dr. Hashim.

"It is today, thanks to UNICEF and to the historic summit it held in 1990, a concern of the world community at large."

Samir Faouri, deputising for Minister of Health Aref Batayneh, highlighted Dr. Grant's focus on getting to children who stood in need rather than waiting for children to turn up for help. He noted that Grant had said in 1992 in an address: "The life-saving health knowledge and technology must be extended to those hundreds of millions of children — in fact the majority of the world's children who will never walk into your office, and who will rarely if ever see the inside of any doctor's office or hospital."

Inam Al Mufti, adviser to Queen Noor, said Dr. Grant "held a compelling conviction in the ability of ordinary people throughout the world to take charge of their own health care, and use low-cost, simple technologies and interventions to improve their life-long quality of life."

"Many others in the world have tried this same approach, but only UNICEF, under James Grant's leadership, working with multinational partners, national governments and local communities, has achieved child survival and child development," Mrs. Mufti said.

"It remains for us, especially those who had the privilege of working with, learning from, and being inspired by James Grant to perpetuate the lessons and fruits of his work," she said.

Ali Attiga, special envoy for the United Nations Secretary-General, world summit for social development, noted that Dr. Grant had three distinct "great human qualities." These, Dr. Attiga said, were: ability to make the "victim feel there is someone who really cares and feels the extent of the disaster," to "interact with the international media in his (special) way of passing the right message to the people at large," and to "offer an effective leadership."

Dr. Attiga said he had travelled with Dr. Grant in August/September 1992 to Somalia as part of a U.N. mission to extend aid to that famine- and war-stricken country and was impressed by the way Dr. Grant conducted his work.

"The delegation was, on the one side," trying to do its own job while Dr. Grant was "equal to the entire delegation put together" in trying to achieve the UNICEF mission of caring for children.

Sabah Allawi, UNICEF's representative in Lebanon, spoke on behalf of all UNICEF representatives in the Middle East and North Africa. Mr. Allawi said that in 1980, when the UNICEF budget was \$160 million, Dr. Grant had urged that "we have to get into the fourth gear."

"I did not understand then what he meant by that," said Mr. Allawi. But today, when the annual UNICEF budget is nearly \$1 billion, he understands what Dr. Grant meant, he said.

Touma Hazou, head of external relations of UNICEF in the Middle East and North Africa, served as master of ceremonies at the memorial service, which included an impressive recital of Dr. Grant's favourite music by the orchestra of the National Music Conservatory.

Nine injured in collision

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nine people were listed in good to fair condition following a road accident Thursday that involved a private bus heading to Iraq and a trailer in Al Safawi area, near Al Azraq, according to police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

A police official told the Jordan Times Friday that the accident, which occurred late Thursday, was attributed to tailgating by the bus driven by Hamid Jaber, an Iraqi national.

According to the police official, the trailer was carrying waste which became loose and "the trailer driver slowed down to avoid the waste."

"The bus was driving too close to the trailer that was carrying waste, and it seems that the trailer driver slowed down and the bus driver was unable to avoid him and slammed into the rear of the trailer," the police official said.

1,750 students granted university scholarships for 1994-1995

AMMAN (J.T.) — Out of a total of 4,175 applications received by the Ministry of Higher Education from students seeking scholarships, the ministry approved 1,750 have been given seats at Jordan's state universities for the 1994-1995 academic year.

According to Ministry of Higher Education's Secretary General Ahmad Hisban, the students granted scholarships were chosen from various governorates on the strength of their results.

Dr. Hisban said that as of this year, the ministry decided to restrict allocations for scholarships to tuition fees only (previous allocations by the ministry covered living expenses as well).

Dr. Hisban said that the list of names includes needy students who, altogether, constitute 20 per cent of the total number of scholarships.

There are 166 needy students benefiting from the scholarships, of whom 89 will be granted both tuition fees and living allowances as they have been proved by the National Aid Fund (NAF) as deserving the assistance, said

Congratulations



The parents, brothers and sisters congratulate their son, and brother Mukaraam Ahmad Muheidat on his marriage to Donna Stanton. Many congratulations (Mabruk)

Kabariti due in Gaza soon

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti is expected to visit the Palestinian autonomous territories and open a Jordanian interests section in the Gaza Strip this week, official sources said.

Mr. Kabariti, who attended Thursday's summit in Cairo among His Majesty King Hussein, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, will also hold talks with leaders of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), the sources said.

The sources could not immediately confirm a report that the Foreign Ministry had decided to appoint Ahmad Mbeideen, head of the information section of the ministry, as head of the Gaza interests section.

It was also not known whether Jordan would open a similar office in Jericho, the West Bank enclave that went under Palestinian

autonomy in May. Jordan and the PNA agreed that the Kingdom would open the Gaza interests section in talks held during a visit Mr. Arafat, president of the PNA and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), paid to Amman late last month.

According to officials, the office will help follow up the implementation of the agreements that Jordan and the PNA signed during Mr. Arafat's visit. It will also be authorised to authenticate documents related to exports and imports between the Palestinian territories and Jordan as well as other papers such as school certificates.

It was not immediately clear whether the office would handle the issuance/renewal of the two-year passports that Jordan gives to Palestinians as a travel document.

Mr. Kabariti was in Cairo on Friday after attending Thursday's summit. He will be attending Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian talks on

displaced Palestinians starting Saturday in the Egyptian capital before returning home on Monday, some reports said.

During his visit to the autonomous territories, Mr. Kabariti is also expected to discuss the practical mechanisms for implementing the Jordanian-PNA cooperation agreements. The PNA cabinet as well as the Jordanian Council of Ministers have ratified the agreements.

Jordan will be the fourth Arab country to open an interests section in Gaza. The other three are Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, which have already launched the offices or are in the process of doing so.

Palestinian sources said the PNA had approached the Cairo-based Arab League to open an office in the Gaza Strip and also to study possibilities of locating branch offices of some of the league affiliate organisations in the strip. It was not immediately known how the Arab League responded to the proposal.

Traffic Department launches tough campaign against violators

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Traffic Department is launching a campaign and increasing their monitoring of roads and highways in an effort to minimise the number of traffic accidents in the Kingdom, according to Major General Moayed Mubaslat, assistant to the director of the Public Security Department (PSD) for traffic affairs.

In addition to the traffic campaign, the Traffic Department recently proposed a draft law to amend some of the existing traffic laws, Maj. Gen. Mubaslat said.

The stringent traffic measures come following His Majesty King Hussein's call last month for urgent action to end chaos on the Kingdom's roads.

Maj. Gen. Mubaslat told the Jordan Times that traffic officials will concentrate on "dangerous violations," in addition to "our routine job."

The violations, according to the official, include checking extra or heavy truck and bus loads, the functionality of the lights and the light reflectors of vehicles, litter being dumped from cars, crossing a red light, driving over the speed limit and wrongful or dangerous overtaking.

"The reason we are focusing on these traffic violations rather than on others is that those violations are more dangerous," Maj. Gen. Mubaslat explained.

He said violators will have their licences taken and if the same violation is repeated, it could lead to the suspension of the driver licence for good. Depending on the nature of the

violation, Maj. Gen. Mubaslat maintained, some motorists could be sent to jail.

"Such violations will result in the suspension of the violator's licence in addition to a high fine and sometimes imprisonment," Maj. Gen. Mubaslat told the Jordan Times Thursday.

The draft law, the result of concerted efforts of the Ministry of Interior, the PSD and the legislative bureau at the Prime Ministry, is being overruled and is in its final stages, Maj. Gen. Mubaslat said.

"The traffic operation should be complete and comprehensive, and the new proposed law, if approved, will help accomplish the comprehensive traffic operation," he said.

According to Maj. Gen. Mubaslat, "one of the most important issues in the draft law is imposing the point system, that he said, will count the number of violations by a motorist which could lead to the suspension of his/her licence after a certain number of points."

Moreover, he said, the draft law suggested strengthening the punishment of some of the violations. He would not elaborate on the type of violations.

"We also stressed on the importance to conduct a study on group transportation, and imposing a system for motorists to control their working hours and wages," he said.

The Traffic Department also called on the Ministry of Education to include traffic education in its curriculum, he said.

One new measure stipulates that fines for running a red light will be JD 50 to

200, or 7 to 90 days in jail.

The draft law suggests three months to one year jail terms for violations such as fleeing the scene of an accident, while driving intoxicated, using forged number plates and driving with a suspended licence.

In addition, the proposed law suggested imposing higher fines, of up to JD 200, for wrongful overtaking, speeding and disposing of litter, oil, solid and other materials while driving. Repeated violations, death-related accidents and driving while intoxicated will lead to the suspension of the driving licence and jail terms in some cases.

If the draft law is approved, the traffic official said, it will be presented to a ministerial committee for consideration and approval. Then it will be sent to the Cabinet and Parliament for approval.

Last year's traffic statistics indicate that 443 people were killed in road accidents in the Kingdom, which also injured 12,516 people in 26,837 road accidents.

The reason for the increase in the number of accidents is the increase in the number of vehicles and people, Maj. Gen. Mubaslat explained, adding that lack of traffic education among motorists, and the old age of some of the vehicles operating also contributed to the numbers.

According to the official, there was an increase of 15,000 vehicles in 1994 over the previous figure. In addition, he said that 90 per cent of the vehicles operating in the Kingdom were made between the years 1959 to 1985.

Over JD29m allocated for investment in Amman area

AMMAN (Petra) — The

government has approved the JD29,484,793 capital expenditure for the Amman Governorate for the year 1995, according to Amman Governor Talaat Al Nawaiseh.

In an interview with the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, Mr. Nawaiseh said the capital expenditure budget will cover a number of projects.

jects.

Mr. Nawaiseh said other development projects will be carried out through loans and grants allocated for in the state budget.

These projects include education and training at a cost of JD4 million, the third Urban Development Project which will be carried out at a cost of one million dinars,

Tala Al Ali telecommunication project which will be carried out at a cost of JD1.5 million, a hazardous and poisonous waste dumping site at Suwaqa, at a cost of JD2 millions, Wadi Seer water network improvement and sewage treatment plant, at a cost of one million dinars, in addition to other small-scale projects.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

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- * A BS degree in computer science from a West European or U.S. university is preferable-not essential.
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Applicants should send their CV's with a recent personal photo to P.O.Box 383 Amman 11118 - Jordan.

Diplomats agree on terms for Peru-Ecuador ceasefire

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) — Negotiators for Peru and Ecuador agreed Friday morning on ceasefire terms to halt nine days of fighting in a disputed section of jungle on their border, Brazil's acting foreign minister said.

"We reached an accord that was approved by everyone," an elated Sebastiao Do Rego Barros, Brazil's acting foreign minister, said when the session ended.

Mr. Barros did not give details of the agreement but said it had been sent to the governments of Ecuador and Peru for study.

Mr. Barros said the delegates would meet again Friday afternoon "when we hope to receive final approval of the accord and we can put an end to this senseless war."

Peru and Ecuador each accused the other of starting the fighting, which broke out in earnest on Jan. 26, by crossing into the disputed territory, a 50-mile (80-kilometre) stretch of jungle-covered Cordillera Del Condor Mountains 530 miles (850 kilometres) north of Lima. The area contains gold, uranium and possibly oil deposits.

Each side has given conflicting accounts of casualties, but at least dozens of soldiers have been killed in the fighting in the disputed area.

The ceasefire agreement came at the end of a third straight all-night session at Itamaraty Palace, the Foreign Ministry's office in Rio de Janeiro.

Delegates from Brazil, Chile, Argentina and the United States — the guarantor nations of the 1942 treaty that set the Peru-Ecuador border after a war — took part in the talks.

"For the first time since the beginning we worked together the whole night, with all six representatives at the table," Mr. Barros said.

Although President Sixto Duran-Ballen of Ecuador



This photo released by the Ecuadorian army shows a group of Ecuadorian troops positioned outside the Amazonian town of Soldado Monge near the Peruvian border. Ecuadorian and Peruvian forces have been fighting at the frontier between the two countries since Jan. 26 over a border dispute (AFP photo)

proposed a ceasefire Tuesday and President Alberto Fujimori of Peru made a counter-offer Wednesday, diplomats couldn't agree on the procedure.

Julio Freyre, an Argentine diplomat, said Thursday that Ecuador had agreed to Peru's demands of a demilitarised zone along the border with independent observers.

But he said the Peruvians were the greater sticklers for details, such as how far and how fast troops must pull back from the combat zone.

The two remained in separate rooms at the palace, while delegates of the other countries acted as go-betweens. They finally agreed to sit at the same table Thursday.

Meanwhile, Peruvian

forces advanced on Ecuadorian positions and claimed to have overrun an army outpost, even as the two countries appeared to reach a preliminary ceasefire accord in their jungle border war.

Peruvian military commander Gen. Nicolas Hermosa Thursday said 49 soldiers — 43 of the Ecuadorians — had been killed in the last two days of skirmishes.

The Ecuadorian military confirmed the fighting, saying Peruvian troops launched morning attacks against various border posts. But it said only one Ecuadorian was wounded and one was missing.

The conflicting reports were indicative of the week-long war, in which each country has accused the other of

Clinton picks new surgeon general

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton nominated a new surgeon general, an obstetrician who founded a programme that distributes condoms to youths and who supported an organisation that provides abortion counseling.

Henry Foster Jr. would replace Joycelyn Elders, fired by Mr. Clinton for outspoken remarks that riled conservatives.

In an Oval Office address, Mr. Clinton ordered Dr. Foster to "help America attack the epidemic of teen pregnancies and unmarried pregnancies." He said the surgeon general is "the public face of our public health service."

Dr. Foster promised to emphasise prenatal care, along with teenage pregnancy. "There is nothing more stifling than a compromised beginning," he said.

Mr. Clinton promised no new money for a teen pregnancy campaign and said he hopes private business will help. Aides say few new initiatives are involved but that Mr. Clinton hopes to increase the issue's visibility.

Administration officials predicted that Dr. Foster, a Tennessee doctor with ties to Mr. Clinton's native Arkansas, would be less controversial than Dr. Elders.

Dr. Elders was fired in December after saying school children should be taught about masturbation. Her support for distributing contraceptives to students and



U.S. President Bill Clinton (right) looks on as his nominee for U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Henry Foster Jr. speaks during ceremonies at the White House (AFP photo)

her strong abortion-rights views also drew criticism from conservatives.

At least one critic disagreed that Dr. Foster will escape such flaps. "The president is making another mistake, and it's my hope that the Senate will not," said Gary Bauer, president of Family Research Council, a conservative think tank and lobbying group.

"Dr. Foster appears to be

Angry man drives car through hospital door

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP) — A man who reportedly thought his ill wife got too little attention at a hospital found an effective remedy: He smashed his car through the front door. Once inside Sahlgrenska Hospital in the western Swedish town of Gothenburg about 5 km (3 miles) from the city, the man — whose wife is a patient — found the reception area empty except for one surprised person.

"The television people," the man shouted from his car, according to the Swedish News Agency (TT). The onlooker, however, answered that he preferred to call the police. So the intruder put his car in reverse and backed out the same way he entered, TT reported. Police tracked the man from the license plate and arrested him a few hours later at his home where he was waiting. Police said he was angry at the lack of attention at the hospital for his seriously ill wife, TT said. The man, whose name was not released, will likely be charged with damaging property, he will be required to pay the 100,000 kronor (\$13,300) repair bill, TT said.

Evel Knievel wins suit against hotel

SPOKANE, Washington (AP) — Evel Knievel, the daredevil who built a career on his reputation for fearlessness, convinced a jury Thursday that he had been "screwed to death" when an old friend attacked him in a hotel room. After a week-long civil trial, a jury in Spokane County Superior Court ordered the Ritzpath Hotel to pay the about \$50,000 in its responsibility in the 1989 attack, which occurred after a desk clerk handed the key to Mr. Knievel's room to his sometime drinking buddy Clarence Paulsen. On the witness stand last week, Mr. Knievel, 56, who became famous in the 1970s for leaping over rows of buses and other obstacles astride his motorcycle, testified that he had been "screwed to death" by the fight and haunted by periodic nightmares ever since. The jury awarded Mr. Knievel a total of \$72,500 for lost wages, expenses, and pain and suffering. But it held that the hotel was responsible for only 70 per cent of the award. According to trial testimony given by both Mr. Paulsen and Mr. Knievel, Mr. Paulsen used the key to enter the tenth-floor room, where he found Knievel in bed with Mr. Paulsen's former girlfriend, Mr. Knievel admitted to being in bed with Mr. Paulsen's ex-girlfriend, accused Mr. Paulsen of attacking him, leaving him with a bloody nose and bruises. Mr. Knievel said he believed he would have been killed had he not grabbed Mr. Paulsen's 357-calibre revolver and aimed it, without shooting, at his attacker. Mr. Paulsen, who has since been convicted of cocaine trafficking and is in jail awaiting sentencing, denied attacking Mr. Knievel and said he left the room after discovering the couple in bed.

Aquino's unwed, pregnant daughter to quit showbiz

MANILA (AP) — Former President Corason Aquino's unwed daughter will quit showbiz in an attempt to avoid the continuing scandal over her pregnancy by a married man twice her age, her manager said. Kris Aquino will not renew the contract for her television talk show when it expires next week, manager Lolit Solis said. "She wants to be totally out of the limelight," said Solis, who added that Kris was crying when she talked to her. The younger Aquino also starred in several movies. Kris, who will be 14 on Feb. 14, caused a nationwide scandal when she admitted carrying the child of movie action star Phillip Salvador, who has three children by his wife and a fourth by another mistress.

Hungary: Potatoes wanted

BUDAPEST (AP) — Hungary is to give an import allowance for potatoes, which became more expensive than oranges recently, due to a 17 per cent crop drop this year and free price controls here, said Hungary's potato grower whose potato is largely based on this variety, is to allow imports of 30,000 tonnes of potatoes.

Dutch breathe as flood waters

THE HAGUE (AP) — Dutch authorities began Friday preparing the return of a quarter of a million people as rivers swollen by the country's worst floods in a century receded and dikes threatened the government's attempt to be holding out. Although the government assessed no date had been set for letting residents return to the lowland areas, means of young agriculturalists have been put on standby to help farmers organize the return of their families and livestock from flooded areas.

Railway connections and stations which were closed down in the affected areas were also expected to reopen Monday.

Interior Ministry spokesman Herbert Rob said Monday was the earliest possible return date but he warned that the fragility of saturated river dikes meant the threat of catastrophe had not disappeared.

"The peak waters have been passing towards safety but should not be interpreted as meaning that the danger of the dikes collapsing has passed," he said.

"Structurally it's very hard to say how much damage has been done and if there is the slightest suggestion that any of the dikes are not stable, people will not be allowed back."

The swollen Rhine tributary, the Waal, was receding at the rate of two centimetres (an inch) an hour but Interior Minister Hans Dijkstal warned that this presented new dangers for its sodden sand-and-grass banks.

"The dikes are so saturated we don't know long they can resist. If the water level goes down too quickly there is danger of landslides," he said.

Infrared photographs taken by Dutch Air Force F16 jets have revealed extensive shifts in the internal structure of the dikes along

Polls favour

ROME (AP) — Ex-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing alliance would form the next government in an Italian general election were held now, an opinion poll said Friday.

The report, to be published in the weekly Panorama Saturday, came as press reports tipped economic Romano Prodi to lead a centre-left alliance to challenge Mr. Berlusconi as the country's political camps gear up for early elections.

The opinion poll, carried out among 1,700 electors Jan. 30 and 31, said that

Balladur, S

PARIS (R) — French President Jacques Chirac and new European Commission President Jacques Delors found some common ground on the vexed issue of broadcasting quotas for European television stations, aides said.

French leaders, adapting to protect their audiovisual industry from flood of cheap Hollywood productions, clashed with Mr. Santer after he said interview last week quotas were temporary unsatisfactory expedient.

But after they met for a day-long talk between the commission and the Paris government, France's six-month EU presidency, they found some agreement ways to promote the European audiovisual sector.

"The prime minister led out clearly French determination to achieve both a programme to strengthen European audiovisual productions and a 'telewithout borders' deal."

Death toll

TOKYO (Agence) Japanese police said that the confirmed death toll in the Kobe earthquake jumped to 5,243 as 11 more were killed by the disaster, the official tally said.

The toll could be further as police are checking death certificates for about 100 other spokesmen said.

Six people were killed as of Friday, A 26,807 people were injured in the earthquake, the worst disaster since the Great Kanto earthquake 140,000 in Tokyo.

About 103,000 buildings were destroyed in Kobe and surround

Southern Africans urge aid donors: 'Don't cut us adrift'

LILONGWE (AFP) — Malawian President Bakili Muluzi urged European and other donor countries not to "cut us adrift onto the high seas," when he opened a conference of the regional southern African Development Community (SADC) here Friday.

"We must express alarm at any move to cut us adrift into the high seas. We know that some of our donors are under political and other pressures to cut aid. We urge them not to abandon us in this hour of need," Mr. Muluzi said.

The SADC, grouping 11 countries in southern Africa, was bolstered last year by the arrival of its one-time main opponent South Africa after multi-racial elections there in April.

Set up in 1979 as the Southern African Development

Coordination Conference, the re-named SADC was originally aimed at harmonising development plans and reducing the region's economic dependence on South Africa.

Speaking for SADC's main financial backers in the European Union, French prime ministerial aide Roger Romani pledged to continue helping the region in the recent trend towards peace, stability and economic development.

With the end of apartheid, elections in Mozambique and a tentative peace process in Angola, the situation in southern Africa is looking more promising than in years.

Mr. Romani said the EU had been impressed with the democratic changes in the region.

"The European Union is

Kidnappers kill Russian deputy

MOSCOW (AFP) — A Russian legislator with links to this country's free-wheeling business community was found slain with a bullet wound in the neck Thursday after being kidnapped from a bar, the news agency ITAR-TASS reported.

Sergei Skoroshkin, 34, an independent member of the State Duma, had been abducted Wednesday night by four men armed with sub-machine guns who were posing as policemen when they entered the bar at Zarsk, near Moscow.

Mr. Skoroshkin, a businessman who won election to the Duma in December 1993, made headlines last year when he shot and killed a man who had allegedly shot at him, as well as a woman who got in the line of fire. Proceedings against him were halted on grounds that he had acted in self-defence.

The ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party later claimed that Mr. Skoroshkin's murder was revenge for remarks made by its leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy at a Council of Europe meeting in Strasbourg, Interfax News Agency reported.

Leaky thruster jeopardises U.S. shuttle's rendezvous with Russians

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AFP) — A thruster on the space shuttle Discovery began leaking shortly after liftoff early Friday, jeopardising a programmed rendezvous with the Soviet-made Mir space station, NASA said.

Discovery blasted off on an eight-day mission with NASA's first female pilot and a Russian cosmonaut at 12:22 a.m. (0522 GMT) after a 24-hour delay due to problems with a navigational unit that had to be replaced.

Shortly after the spacecraft reached orbit, however, two of its 38 steering jets failed, with one of them leaking slightly, said shuttle manager Loren Shriver.

He said the leaking thruster could force Discovery's six-member crew to shift all three jets in that section, disrupting Monday's planned rendezvous with the orbiting Mir station.

But he added: "There might be ways to work around that."

The leaking jet has been positioned facing the Sun in the hope of melting any frozen fuel that might obstruct the thruster valve, a procedure that has worked for similar situations in the past, Mr. Shriver said.

In case the three jets have to be shut down, he said, Discovery would get no closer than 300 metres (1,000 feet) from the orbiting space station, rather than 10 metres (30 feet) as planned.

The rendezvous at some 392 kilometres (240 miles) above Earth is the cornerstone of Discovery's eight-day mission.

It would allow the astronauts to photograph the space station from all angles in preparation for an actual docking of a Mir and U.S. shuttle in June 1995 as part of a joint U.S.-Russian programme.



The space shuttle Discovery lifts off from Kennedy Space Center's launch pad 39B on its way to orbit early Friday (AFP photo)

U.N. seeks 7,000 peacekeepers for Angola

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The secretary-general has proposed sending some 7,000 peacekeepers to back up a peace accord for Angola, saying a November agreement to end two decades of civil war has generally held.

Escorting humanitarian aid convoys in the devastated southwest African country would be part of the force's mission, U.N. chief Boutros Ghali said in a report to the Security Council.

The Council is expected to approve the force next week. U.N. member countries have already pledged the needed troops.

The plan calls for six batta-

lions of roughly 1,000 troops each to be sent to Angola within three months, beefing up a U.N. presence of some 300 military observers.

The U.N. force will try to ensure that the peace accord's terms are carried out, including the disarming of UNITA rebels who have fought the government for control of the country since independence from Portugal in 1975.

More than 500,000 Angolans died as a result of the civil war. UNITA — an acronym for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola — and the government together

Prosecution witnesses seek to tear down Simpson

LOS ANGELES (R) — He beat her, dreamed of killing her and seemed unfazed by her death, witnesses say, but in the first week of trial testimony, O.J. Simpson's jury has yet to see a shred of physical evidence linking him to his ex-wife's murder.

Instead, in a vivid, often chilling presentation, prosecutors have first set out to tear down Simpson's all-American nice-guy image and replace it with the portrait of a raging, wife-beating bully with a "fatal obsession."

Jurors listened with rapt attention Thursday to a 1003 recording of a Nicole Brown Simpson frantically pleading for help from an emergency operator while in the background the former football great yelled and cursed at her.

They heard one witness, an ex-police officer and long-time friend, recall sitting with Simpson the day after the June 12 murders and seeing no sign of sadness as he watched TV footage of the bodies of his ex-wife and her friend Ron Goldman being

Prosecution witnesses seek to tear down Simpson

removed from the crime scene.

And on a giant TV screen, jurors saw handwritten letters to then-wife Nicole apologising for hurting her in a 1989 incident in which police found her in the bushes, bruised, battered and hysterical, crying "he's going to kill me."

Prosecutors promise more gripping testimony Friday, when Nicole's raven-haired sister Denise Brown, who has already told talk-show audience she has no doubt of Simpson's guilt, is called to further detail an alleged history of domestic violence.

Simpson has pleaded not guilty to the murders, and his defence attorneys contend that his marriage to Nicole was merely "bumpy" like many others.

The prosecution's bold strategy defies the traditional approach in a murder trial — presenting forensic and medical evidence and then building a theory for motive. But legal analysts say it may be the only way to launch a murder case against someone,

as famous and as popular as Simpson.

Once his celebrity aura is lifted, experts say, it is only a matter of time before jurors start seeing such crucial evidence as the infamous bloody gloves and socks that prosecutors must use to link Simpson to the murder scene.

In a display of courtroom theatre Thursday, Deputy District Attorney Christopher Darden said Nicole Brown Simpson feared for her life and left a trail for investigators in a bank safe deposit box.

"Nicole Brown, at the tender age of 30, in 1990, believed something bad was going to happen to her, and that it would happen at the hands of the defendant," Darden said.

Among the items found locked away at a Los Angeles bank were her will, three letters from Simpson, polaroid pictures of her bruised and battered face and newspaper clippings about her on Jan. 1, 1989, beating by her then-husband.

In letters laced with spell-

ing and grammatical errors, he apologised profusely for hitting her, saying "I only hope I didn't screw it up with this crazy drunken incident."

Ronald Shipp, who said he was friend of both Simpsons, testified that while watching TV coverage of the case with the former football great at his mansion the night after the murders, he saw no sign of sadness or a sense of loss.

Instead, what he saw was "anger at the news coverage that he was actually being accused of murdering Nicole and Ron," Mr. Shipp testified.

Mr. Shipp had previously testified that on that same night, Simpson confided in him that he had dreams about killing Nicole Brown Simpson.

Under cross-examination Thursday, defence lawyers continued hammering away at Mr. Shipp's credibility, casting doubt on his claims, contending he was only trying to boost his acting career and eliciting admissions from him that he had a drinking problem.



BRITISH ACTOR DIES: File photo dated Marcy 29, 1994 of British actor Donald Pleasence with his wife Linda, after he received the Order of the British Empire at Buckingham Palace. Pleasence died at his home in France at the age of 75, his agent announced Thursday (AFP photo)

Angry man
car through
hospital door

STOCKHOLM (AP) — A man reportedly thought he was being treated for a heart condition. He was angry and drove his car through the hospital door.

Evel Knievel
wins suit
against hotel

SPOKANE, Wash. — Evel Knievel, the daredevil who built his reputation on his jumps, has won a lawsuit against a hotel.

Dutch breathe easier
as flood waters recede

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Dutch authorities began Friday preparing the return home of a quarter of a million evacuees as rivers swollen by the country's worst floods in a century receded and dikes around the eastern lowlands appeared to be holding out.

Although the government insisted no date had been set for letting residents return to threatened lowland areas, teams of young agricultural students have been put on standby to help farmers organize the return of their families and livestock from Monday.

Railway connections and stations which were closed down in the affected areas were also expected to reopen Monday.

Interior Ministry spokesman Herbert Roh said Monday was the earliest possible return date but he warned that the fragility of saturated river dikes meant the threat of catastrophe had not disappeared.

The peak waters have passed and we appear to be edging towards safety but that should not be interpreted as meaning that the danger of the dikes collapsing has passed," he said.

"Structurally it's very hard to say how much damage has been done and if there is the slightest suggestion that any of the dikes are not stable people will not be allowed back."

The swollen Rhine tributary, the Waal, was receding at the rate of two centimetres (an inch) an hour but Interior Minister Hans Dijkstal warned that this presented new dangers for its sodden sand-and-grass dunes.

"The dikes are so saturated we don't know long they can resist. If the water level goes down too quickly there is a danger of landslides," he said.

Infrared photographs taken by Dutch Air Force F-16 jets have revealed extensive shifts in the internal structure of the dikes along

the Waal, which means any sudden change could result in them either collapsing internally like a failed soufflé or toppling over.

Fine, dry weather across the country since Wednesday has encouraged hopes that the critical point had passed, but also provoked fears of a wave of people prematurely returning to the danger zones.

However authorities report relatively few people attempting to go back to the zones which have been sealed off by police.

"Anyone who tries to return will be sent back," Mr. Rob said.

In most of the endangered villages, handfuls of people resisted the order to leave. Police did not force them but some were asked to sign disclaimers accepting responsibility for the risk.

The biggest group of resistance was in the village of Boven-Hardinxveld, where 400 people stubbornly refused to budge. A dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed but the local authorities did not force the issue.

Since the bulk of evacuees are lodged with friends and family, there is no particular reason for them to rush back.

For those who were obliged to seek refuge in government centres, the experience has been much tougher.

"Boredom is beginning to set in now. We've got a lot of heavy-eyed people this morning," said Dianne Westerk, a coordinator of the evacuation centre in Utrecht.

"The children are coping the best. One of the mothers told me her kids were having the time of their lives," she said. "The longer they don't have to go back to school the better for them."

Like most of the centres, the one at Utrecht has not been filled.

It had facilities for 3,000 people but has only been a third full on its busiest night. Some 250 people left Thurs-



Dutch Queen Beatrix (left) visits the region between the rivers Maas and Waal looking at partly flooded houses of the city of Tiel. Tiel was a ghost town overnight, empty of its 34,000 inhabitants who fled the threat of floodwaters from the River Waal bursting through nearby dikes to drown the countryside (AFP photo)

day as more families in the area came forward with offers to lodge the evacuees.

In the south of the country, around Limbourg, several hundred people have already returned to their homes and begun the process of cleaning up.

Although this area is the only one to be actually under water, the situation there is not as unpredictable as in the low-lying Polder areas to the north.

As the ground on the sides of the River Maas is higher than the river, there is not the potential for a sudden deluge caused by a dike giving away.

The community spirit shown by the thousands who have offered lodging to eva-

cuees was reflected in the response to a television appeal Thursday for funds to help the victims.

By Friday morning a total of 35 million guilders (\$20.6 million) had been pledged. Prime Minister Wim Kok has promised to double any contributions from the public.

Fears that the abandoned homes would be hit by opportunistic burglars have not materialised. Police have reported only four burglaries in the deserted region around the town of Tiel and have made four arrests.

Queen Beatrix spent a second day touring the flood-threatened zones and talking with emergency crews and evacuees in shelters.

NATO gets first look at
new units in east Germany

KLIETZ, Germany (R) — NATO political leaders got their first look at the alliance's new units in eastern Germany Friday when German forces staged mock air and land attacks on an imaginary enemy.

NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes, German Defence Minister Volker Ruehe and representatives of other alliance countries watched at this former east German base as 1,200 Bundeswehr soldiers and airmen flexed their military muscle.

Claes, on his first visit to Germany since succeeding the late Manfred Woerner as NATO chief last year, said: "Another vestige of the divided Germany is gone. All of Germany is now protected by the alliance."

"I am glad to see the newest NATO troops opening a new era of cooperation," he said at the base where former Soviet Presi-

dent Leonid Brezhnev and East German leader Erich Honecker had once observed Warsaw Pact manoeuvres.

In his speech at the base east of Potsdam, Mr. Ruehe said: "The units here have reached the standards of proficiency and readiness of the forces in the west."

"They are well trained, well equipped and highly motivated to contribute to the alliance and they are prepared to take on the same missions and risks in international crisis management as their fellow soldiers in NATO."

Under the 1990 "two-plus-four" treaty that paved the way for German unity, Germany stayed in NATO but agreed to keep its soldiers in the formerly Communist east initially out of the alliance's integrated command.

With last year's departure of Russian troops from the former east Germany and

allied troops from West Berlin, these units came under NATO control at the start of 1995. Germany has around 60,000 soldiers in the area.

Mr. Claes began the day in Bonn with a meeting with Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel. He told reporters afterwards that the Western alliance would decide on political grounds which of its former Warsaw Pact adversaries could become members and it was anxious not to isolate Russia.

NATO had not reached the stage of considering which former Communist countries could join and when that decision would not be based simply on whether they fulfilled certain membership conditions. "We are not preparing just a list of criteria. Enlargement is a political decision," he said.

A country that could not fulfill all conditions could still be admitted. "This is perfectly

possible," Mr. Claes said.

Many countries in Eastern Europe are keen to shelter under NATO's security umbrella, but Russia has said it could not tolerate the expansion of the alliance up to its own borders.

Mr. Claes said the hoped NATO would conclude its internal discussions on the mechanics of enlargement by September and then ask the 16 heads of government to make a decision on the next steps at a summit in December.

Russia would be kept informed of NATO's plans, which the alliance chief said would bring Moscow more security.

"We have no secrets. We are in favour of transparency," he added. "We are not trying to isolate Russia. If necessary, I will sing this song every day again in order to convince Moscow that we have good intentions."

Burmese
monk sees
Aung San
Suu Kyi

RANGOON (AFP) — A Buddhist monk who helped initiate talks between the Burmese government and dissident Aung San Suu Kyi said Friday that both sides had told him they wanted to continue a dialogue begun last year.

Rewatta Dhamma, 66, a Burmese monk resident in Birmingham, England, told reporters before leaving Rangoon that he finally was allowed to meet Aung San Suu Kyi — who has been under house arrest here since July 1989 — Monday.

"I did not come here on a political mission and have not tried to influence either side one way or the other," he said. "I can only pray that as good Buddhists, they will look upon each other with compassion and settle their differences amicably."

Rewatta said both Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi and the military government had explained their positions to him and "both sides expressed willingness to continue with the dialogue."

The monk said Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi told him she had outlined her stance in the statement that her husband, British academic Michael Aris, carried to the outside world last month after visiting her over Christmas.

In his she said she remained committed to the cause of democracy and had not struck any deals with the junta.

Rewatta said he met twice this trip with senior General Than Shwe, the junta chief, and five times with Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, the junta's first secretary.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi and the generals did not go into details during their two meetings, last September and in October, Rewatta said. But he said the dialogue has potential for success since the two sides can meet again at any time.

Although the monk was believed to have been instrumental in persuading the generals to meet the dissident for talks, Rewatta insisted he was not really a mediator in the proceedings.

"I feel that there is a crisis in the nation and as the people are suffering, it would be a remission of me as a practising Buddhist to ignore it completely and not try to intervene," he said.

Meanwhile, refugees said Friday, Burmese troops are forcing hundreds of civilians to act as human shields when attacking insurgents along the Thai border.

The charges were among a barrage of accusations — from the United States, human rights groups and others — against the Burmese military over its human rights record.

The refugees, among the 15,000 who have fled across the border seeking sanctuary in Thailand, said the military junta also was forcing civilians to carry their weapons and supplies in combat zones.

Amnesty International, the London-based rights group, condemned the reports of forced portering, charging that scores of those who have escaped had been beaten and mistreated by the junta.

Burma has denied such accusations, saying it is helping to develop poverty-stricken rural areas inhabited by ethnic minorities and restore democracy to the country.

Ireland frees 5 IRA convicts

DUBLIN (R) — Ireland freed five IRA prisoners Friday in a disputed gesture of clemency to keep the Northern Ireland peace process on track at a critical stage.

Pamela Kane, the only jailed female Irish Republican Army prisoner in Ireland, walked out of Limerick Prison in southwestern Ireland with a clenched fist salute almost three years before she was due to end a 10-year term for robbery.

She was the fifth IRA prisoner released Friday in a goodwill gesture by the Dublin government to reward the IRA's landmark ceasefire last September to its 25-year war against British rule of Northern Ireland.

Earlier, four IRA men jailed for firearms possession left Port Laoise maximum security prison 40 miles (60 km) south of Dublin around two years before they were due to be freed.

"We are endeavouring to ensure that the opportunity for peace on this island is built upon," Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring told Northern Ireland radio.

He said the gesture, strongly condemned by Northern Ireland Protestants and viewed unfavourably by the London government, was intended to reinforce the

peace that has existed in Northern Ireland since the IRA and its pro-British Protestant loyalist foes declared ceasefires six months ago.

"Everybody values the ceasefire and the end of the killing. I think now it is important that we make sure that it (the end of killing) is permanent," Mr. Spring said.

The move was welcomed by Sinn Fein, the IRA's political arm, which called on Britain to reverse a refusal to grant a similar amnesty to hundreds of prisoners on its territory.

But it was denounced as capitulation by Northern Ireland's Protestant legislators, who fear the peace effort is nudging the province towards reunification with Ireland.

"It's giving in to terrorism," said the Ulster Unionist Party's David Trimble. "It's a bribe and the problem with bribes is that people will always ask for more."

The four men freed Friday were to have been released by the end of next year while Ms. Kane, jailed for robbery, would have ended her sentence at the end of 1997.

She was expected to marry an IRA activist, Martin O'Neill, who is in jail in Northern Ireland, after a three-year correspondence, friends said.

Ms. Kane, 30, has never met O'Neill but was hoping to marry him when he has served his term for firearms offences later this year. The couple have never met.

The release was designed to keep the year-old Anglo-Irish peace plan alive after it was seriously threatened by the leak of a document purporting to detail the partners' next steps.

The Times of London said the document showed the two governments were planning to set up powerful cross-border bodies which would bring the two neighbours closer than at any time since Britain partitioned the island seven decades ago.

Unionists, who say they will never relinquish sovereignty, have made veiled threats to bring down Prime Minister John Major's minority government unless the plan is watered down.

"They fear that Britain and Ireland are secretly hatching plans to loosen the province's British ties and that Dublin is using its role in the peace process to win back Northern Ireland, which its constitution claims."

Britain refuses to grant amnesty to gunmen from either the IRA, which has fought to end British rule, or loyalist guerrilla groups which have waged a bloody guerrilla war to maintain it.

Polls favour Berlusconi right-wing alliance

ROME (AFP) — Ex-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing alliance would form the next government if an Italian general election were held now, an opinion poll said Friday.

The report, to be published in the weekly Panorama Saturday, came as press reports tipped economist Romano Prodi to lead a new centre-left alliance to challenge Mr. Berlusconi as the country's political camps gear up for early elections.

The opinion poll, carried out among 1,700 electors on Jan. 30 and 31, said that the

parties in Mr. Berlusconi's coalition that won landmark elections last March, could again sweep to power with an overall 49.4 per cent of the vote.

The coalition comprised the National Alliance, which at the weekend publicly broke with its fascist past, Mr. Berlusconi's Forza Italia, and the small Christian Democrat Centre Party.

Forza Italia, according to the poll remains the country's largest political force, with 29 per cent of support. The National Alliance meanwhile garners 18.6 per cent, the poll

said. The Christian Democrat Centre would obtain 1.8 per cent.

Support for the federalist Northern League, which was also in Mr. Berlusconi's coalition before bringing down the government amid acrimony in December, has meanwhile collapsed to 3.5 per cent, the poll showed. The party obtained 8.7 per cent last March.

Mr. Berlusconi is also trying to woo the leader of the (ex-Christian Democratic) Italian Popular Party, Rocco Buttiglione, whose party would according to the

Panorama poll obtain 9.1 per cent of the vote.

In the opposing camp, former Christian Democrat Prodi, meanwhile told Italian newspapers in an interview that he was considering running at the head of a centre-left grouping.

"It is no mystery that I've been thinking about it for months," he said in his office at the centre of economic studies in Bologna, which he heads, adding that he would shortly make his decision known.

The papers said they fully expect Mr. Prodi to stand.

Balladur, Santer said closer on European TV quotas

PARIS (R) — French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and new European Commissioner President Jacques Santer found some common ground on the vexed issue of broadcasting quotas for European television stations Friday, aides said.

French leaders, adamant about protecting their audiovisual industry from a flood of cheap Hollywood productions, clashed with Mr. Santer after he said in an interview last week that quotas were temporary and unsatisfactory expedient.

But after they met Friday as part of day-long talks between the commission and the Paris government on France's six-month EU presidency, aides said they had found some agreement on ways to promote the European audiovisual sector.

"The prime minister spelled out clearly French determination to achieve fast both a programme to support European audiovisual productions and a television without borders directive

that maintains existing achievements, that is to say the volume of European films broadcast by generalist channels," an aide to Mr. Balladur said.

A 1989 directive, now up for review, ordered European television stations to broadcast at least 50 per cent European productions wherever possible. But that loophole effectively allowed some member states to ignore quotas.

Sources familiar with the talks said Mr. Santer told Mr. Balladur that his ideas "seemed extremely positive" and the main question was how to put them into practice.

"(Santer) showed his desire to move forward quickly on this issue so that the French presidency can do useful work on these two subjects," one source said, adding that the commission president had promised to make proposals very soon.

The previous commission which left office last week failed to agree on a new

directive because free traders led by British Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan opposed any tightening of the enforcement of quotas.

France, determined to uphold its language and culture in a presidential election year, has made the issue one of the priorities of its EU presidency. But it faces opposition from Britain, Germany and Luxembourg, Mr. Santer's home country.

The powerful U.S. television and film industry has lobbied energetically against the quota system after failing to have it outlawed in last year's GATT world trade treaty, from which the EU won a so-called "cultural exception" at French insistence.

On other issues, Mr. Balladur and Mr. Santer discussed preparations for a 1996 conference of EU member states to review the workings of the Maastricht Treaty and discuss institutional reform, stalled efforts to improve nuclear power plant safety in Eastern

Europe and an acceleration of trade talks with Morocco. France has made closer trade and aid relations with the Mediterranean states one of the priorities of its presidency to balance aid to Central and East European states that are candidates to join the union.

Meanwhile, seeking to reinforce the Franco-German partnership in the European Union, President Francois Mitterrand and Chancellor Helmut Kohl discussed EU issues Thursday on the eve of a key EU meeting.

The Mitterrand-Kohl talk, followed by a dinner at the president's Elysees Palace, was billed as an informal discussion, not a summit, the palace said.

But the message was clear on the day before a meeting in Paris of the European Commission. France was seeking harmony with its most important ally while it holds the six-month rotating presidency of the all-powerful EU council of ministers.

Death toll from Kobe quake revised up to 5,243

TOKYO (Agencies) — Japanese police said Friday that the confirmed death toll in the Kobe earthquake had jumped to 5,243 as families bereaved by the disaster completed the formalities of registering their dead.

The toll could increase further as police are checking death certificates being filed for about 100 others, the spokesman said.

Six people were still missing as of Friday. A total of 26,807 people were injured in the earthquake, Japan's worst disaster since the 1923 Great Kanto earthquake killed 140,000 in Tokyo and Yokohama.

About 103,000 homes and buildings were destroyed in Kobe and surrounding areas

in the Jan. 17 tremor, now known in Japan as the Great Hanshin earthquake. Hanshin denotes the Osaka-Kobe area.

Meanwhile Japan's Red Cross Society said Thursday it has received 30 billion yen (\$300 million) in donations, mostly from other Japanese, for victims of the devastating Kobe earthquake. The total exceeded any of its previous relief campaigns.

Meanwhile, local officials announced that damage from the 7.2 magnitude quake is likely to exceed \$100 billion in the worst-hit prefecture.

The government of Hyogo Prefecture, which includes Kobe, estimated damage worth 9.5 trillion yen (\$95 billion), one trillion yen (\$10

billion) more than its previous calculation. It said the total would probably exceed 10 trillion yen (\$100 billion).

The national government Thursday said it would spend almost 15 billion yen (\$150 million) to build 30,000 temporary housing units. Quake victims Thursday moved into four prefabricated houses, the first completed since the temblor.

"It was wonderful. It was too good for me," said Kimiko Ishibitsu, 70 of her new 29 1-square metre (105-square feet) space with two rooms, a bathroom, a kitchen and a toilet. The four homes are all on hard-hit Awaji Island.

Many people will have to spend two to three more months in shelters such as tents and converted school

gymnasiums before housing is available, Rumiko Kadonaga of the Hyogo government said Thursday.

"We are very concerned whether volunteers can continue their activities for that long," she said. "We can't estimate how many volunteers are working in the quake-stricken areas. It might be 50,000 or 100,000."

In normal times, Japanese are reluctant to help people who aren't family, friends or close neighbours, and people here are also sometimes reluctant to accept gifts for fear of becoming obligated to the giver.

But the Kobe quake has brought out charitable impulses throughout the nation.

Manila marks wartime destruction

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The crackle of gunfire echoed from loudspeakers Friday and students dressed as U.S. soldiers led "prisoners" to freedom as Manila commemorated its World War II liberation and destruction.

The U.S. 1st Cavalry Division entered the city on Feb. 3, 1945, setting off a month-long battle in which about 18,000 U.S. and Japanese soldiers were killed.

But 100,000 civilians also died and the city was destroyed in one of the great tragedies of the Pacific theatre.

The ceremonies were delayed for nearly two hours by rain, which prevented President Fidel Ramos from returning from a war commemoration in Tagaytay, 30 miles (50 kilometres) to the south, where the U.S. 51st Parachute Regiment landed to cut off the capital.

"We commemorate this event, not to turn victims against past oppressors but to remind ourselves that whoever is involved, war is the most evil invention of man," Mr. Ramos, a former general, told the crowd. "We cherish peace and the memory of those who died for it."

About 3,000 people, mostly students and about 50 Americans, gathered for the ceremony at the University of Santo Tomas, where American and other allied civilians were detained during the 2½ year Japanese occupation.

After entering the city at sunset, the 1st Cavalry Division sped down the broad avenues and after a brief but fierce firefight, burst into the campus, freeing about 3,700 civilians. The Philippines was at the time an American commonwealth.

The Filipino guerrilla who guided the American troops, Capt. Manuel Colayco, was killed. In Friday's ceremony, student-actors re-enacted the attack, "killing" Japanese defenders and leading actor-internees to safety.

The Filipino guerrilla who guided the American troops, Capt. Manuel Colayco, was killed. In Friday's ceremony, student-actors re-enacted the attack, "killing" Japanese defenders and leading actor-internees to safety.

He wanted a talk with Mr. Pawlak on his return, and hinted darkly that Mr. Walesa may set secure his arm of splintering the coalition.

"We have to assess whether this coalition can survive and govern effectively and until we make this judgment we cannot undertake talks about a different set-up," he said.

Mr. Walesa portrays himself as a last bastion in power of Solidarity-era Poland. He relishes the irony that ex-Communists, who resorted to martial law in 1981 to crush his Solidarity Union, now pose as champions of democracy.

There is no threat from me. I shall never resort to shooting Poles or beating them up," he declared Thursday.

Mr. Walesa's lawyer Lech Falandysz said that although his pretext for dissolving parliament might be controversial, it was good enough to stand up in law.

At the same time, a trial before the state tribunal could boost Mr. Walesa's popularity. He intends to seek a second five-year term in a presidential election later this year.

"From the point of view of elections, the president would benefit by being put before a tribunal by the post-communists," Mr. Falandysz told a radio interview.

But newspapers said Mr. Pawlak suggested the defence minister was rightist politician Romuald Szeremietew, causing uproar in the SLD which fiercely opposed the choice.

SLD leader Aleksander Kwasniewski said Thursday

the government's 1995 budget bill before the country's Constitutional Tribunal, delaying its final approval beyond a three-month deadline and giving himself a debatable pretext for dissolving parliament.

He says this is the only way he can oust Mr. Pawlak, whom he accuses of delaying vital economic reforms and running a government in which some ministers stand accused of corruption.

The president has tried, so far in vain, to persuade the SLD to break with Mr. Pawlak's party and form a pro-reform cabinet.

Mr. Walesa and Mr. Pawlak have also clashed over the vacant cabinet posts of defence and foreign affairs, with Mr. Walesa saying Mr. Pawlak wants to rob him of a say in these appointments.

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Jordanian Perspective

Summit will help advance quest for peace

Dr. Musa Kallam

IT IS TOO early to determine the impact and results of the unprecedented summit that three Arab leaders held with the Israeli prime minister in Cairo on Thursday. But one thing is clear: any such meeting at this crucial stage in Middle East peacemaking has to be positive since it would help advance the quest for an equitable and comprehensive solution to the fundamental problems in the region.

But what we in Jordan are more concerned with is whether Israel sought a superficial image of close interaction with the Arabs to serve the ruling Labour Party or was sincerely interested in seeing the peace process move forward in a manner positive to the Arab side. From the Israeli track record so far in the peace process, it is clear that Israel will not be ready to make any substantial concession to the Arabs unless it gets its own way in return.

We can only hope that Israel had come to the Cairo summit mentally prepared to drop its hardline stance and help advance the quest for overall peace in the region by offering to meet the legitimate Arab demands for the return of territory, including Syria's Golan Heights and Israel's self-styled "security zone" in South Lebanon. But if the Cairo exercise was a political gimmick, then we are actually back square minus one.

The overriding factor in the Cairo summit was indeed the Arab demand for concrete Israeli gestures to advance the peace process based on equitable arrangements for coexistence in the Middle East. But such gestures, no matter how one looks at it, represent the very roots of the problem, particularly among the Israeli electorate. That was the basic contradiction in any Arab-Israeli effort to push the search for equitable and comprehensive peace. Indeed it is a double-edged sword since the very way to achieve the goal of peace in the region is through Israeli moves to meet the Arabs' legitimate demands. But meeting the Arab demands also means a further erosion of the standing of the Israeli Labour Party among the Israeli voters.

Given that the issue of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, the status of Jerusalem and the nuclear issue

were indeed at the top of the Cairo agenda, the fact remained that the Israeli side would have been hard put to make any substantial moves if its intention was to score internal points.

So the lesson to be learnt from the Cairo summit depends on the concrete moves that the four leaders agreed upon since those moves would actually indicate the seriousness of Israel to lift the logjam in the peace negotiations.

No doubt, the deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian track was the focus of the discussions among His Majesty King Hussein, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. However, one fails to see how Israel could hope to produce a major breakthrough to advance the Palestinian track without meeting the basic demand of the Palestinians for its withdrawal from the occupied West Bank and a stop to all Israeli meddling in internal Palestinian affairs.

At the same time, one of the key objectives of Mr. Rabin was to secure some political capital out of the summit to prop up his sagging popularity among his constituency. As such, it was inevitable that he had come prepared to make some token gestures to the Palestinians in return for Mr. Arafat adopting an "iron fist" policy against Palestinian hardliners if only to appease the Israeli electorate.

It was clear that Egypt wanted the Cairo summit to produce a dramatic change in the apparent image of confrontation with Israel over the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly that it is coming under intense American pressure to drop its demand for an Israeli endorsement of the treaty. All said and done, whether Egypt signed the NPT or not is not a key issue here. The issue was Israel's nuclear arsenal — the invisible weapon with which it is threatening the region. Perhaps, the way out of the deadlock was, as reported in the Israeli media, allowing a team of Egyptian nuclear experts to visit some of Israel's nuclear facilities, since such a move would come as a face-saving formula for Mr. Mubarak, particularly in time for his upcoming meeting with President Bill Clinton in Washington.

As far as Jordan is concerned, the Kingdom stands ready to contribute positively to any effort to advance the quest for a comprehensive, just and durable peace settlement between Israel and the Arabs. Jordan, which has regained its water and territorial rights under the peace treaty it signed with Israel in October, has no political objectives from its offer to positively support any such effort except that overall Arab-Israeli peace bodes well for everyone and for the entire region.

It was suggested that Jordan wanted to "legitimise" its peace treaty with Israel with the Cairo summit. That is a very shortsighted view on the part of anyone who suggested it. Jordan does not need to legitimise anything since there is no question of the legitimacy of the peace treaty, a document which has been concluded between two sovereign governments and which does not overlap on anyone's rights. It only takes a cursory look at Jordan's track record in the peace process and the decades that preceded it to ascertain that the Kingdom was always committed to peace and always worked for it. Now, whether some Arab parties liked the treaty or not is a different question altogether, but that does not concern Jordan, whose experience in dealing with the Arabs is full of bitterness over being let down at the very point of breakthrough over the years. We will not let anyone lecture us on that.

It has been made abundantly clear by His Majesty that the course adopted by Jordan to make peace with Israel based on the legitimate and sovereign rights of the Kingdom had nothing to do with any other party. At the same time, Jordan is also keen in seeing peace prevailing throughout the region, whether in the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese tracks or in the context of the wider Arab World and the Jewish state. That was the reason King Hussein accepted the invitation to go to Cairo and attend the summit. For us in Jordan anyone who wants to interpret it anymore than that has ulterior motives that do not bode well for the Kingdom.

Milestone on road to full peace

THE SUMMIT that brought together His Majesty King Hussein, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Cairo over the weekend was a milestone in the process of peace building in the Middle East.

The messages that emerged from the unprecedented meeting are highly significant for the peace negotiations and the vested interests of all four parties, that there are high stakes in seeing the process leading to comprehensive peace. We agree with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' characterisation of the summit as a "peace coalition," but only if it meant that Israel, like Jordan, Egypt and the Palestine National Authority, is determined to work for the attainment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

But the gathering was not, and cannot be seen, as a mere exclusive regional alliance opposed to other key players in the region and the peace process, for whose success Israel holds all the major cards. The significance of the summit stems not only from its convening, its importance also lies in the final communiqué which the four leaders reaffirmed their determination to work for the attainment of comprehensive peace in the area, implement agreements already reached and stressed the need to solve the problems along the Palestinian track, among other significant announcements.

The three Arab leaders who attended the meeting have always recognised the urgency of realising these goals as well as making the Middle East an area free of weapons of mass destruction, releasing the potential of the region from the constraints of conflict and striving to make the Middle East a better place in which to live. It is Israel which has been the obstacle in achieving these goals. And it is Israel which has to make the extra effort to translate the final communiqué of the Cairo summit into a reality that would only remove the shadow of war and suffering from the peoples of the area.

The summit should have given the Israelis a taste of a constructive state of affairs in which the Middle East can live in. Even before Israel has fulfilled all its obligations under the various treaties it has signed with the countries involved in the Cairo summit, the Arab leaders were willing to receive Mr. Rabin and sit down with him in an effort to spread peace all over the region. This scatters the long held Israeli myth of Arab enmity was ideological. If anything, the summit should have the Israelis realise that their policies over the last four decades have been the cause of enmity between Arabs and Jews. But if the Israelis move towards reconciliation on the basis of achieving justice for all, Arabs would be more than willing to reciprocate.

Israel should start acting to prove that it seriously and genuinely wants peace; a peace that is predicated on justice and fairness, not on a balance of power in its favour. An urgent and immediate action should be launched on the Palestinian track. The Jewish state has left much to be desired in terms of its commitment to the Cairo and Oslo deals. The Cairo summit and the positive messages it sent should produce a complete reassessment of Israel's policy on the deals it signed with the Palestinians. That should lead to implementing them fully, and without delay.

But that on its own will not bring the comprehensive peace that the region needs. The Syrian track must witness faster movement. And so must the Lebanese one lead to a just solution on the basis of U.N. resolutions and international legitimacy. When that happens, summits of the leaders of the area could not be the event that the media would receive with such fanfare simply because it is the exception. It will be the normal state of affairs in a region that realises that it must work together if it is to build a better future.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE SUMMIT meeting by the heads of state of Jordan, Egypt, Palestine and Israel in Cairo is a significant development as the four countries are continuing their efforts to ensure peace and stability in the region, said Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily. Israel's participation in the summit means that the Jewish state has become part of the Middle East community, but the Israeli government still has to take steps to enhance its status as a member of this community by meeting the requirements of peace in full, he said. What is expected from the Israeli government at this juncture, said the writer, is implementation of its deal with the Palestinians on the one hand and withdrawal from the Syrian and Lebanese territories on the other. In Palestine, the Israelis are halting their Jewish settlement programmes on Arab lands and defuse the tension with the Palestinian National Authority, also paving the ground for the other steps required for the implementation of the Oslo and Cairo agreements, continued the writer. He said Jordan and Egypt, which have signed peace treaties with Israel, are in a good position to urge the Israeli leaders to comply with the requirements of peace on all tracks so that the aspired comprehensive peace can be attained.

COMMENTING ON a decision by the Ministry of Supply and Amman Municipality to set up open souqs (markets) in the suburbs of the capital during the month of Ramadan, a writer in Sawt Al Shabab daily said that the move was bound to bring down the prices of vegetables and fruits for the consumers' benefit. Ahmed Dabbas said that Amman residents will be happy to turn to these markets where they can buy their needs at lower prices since the vendors pay no rent or income tax and no intermediaries stand in the way between the farmers and consumers.

M. KAHIL



Jordanians celebrate return of occupied land; Israel must implement Oslo deal

By Elia Nasrallah

THE ARAB-Israeli summit in Cairo, the situation in the occupied Arab lands as well as pan-Arab and domestic affairs were given prominence in the local Arabic press in the past week.

The United States has a real interest in the success of the Arab-Israeli summit because it is the sponsor of the peace process, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. Also, being the strategic ally of Israel, it is coming to its help at a time when the Arabs are exercising pressure on the Jewish state to implement U.N. resolutions and other peace requirements, said the paper. It is hoped that Washington would not suffice itself with issuing statements of support for Arab-Israeli meetings but would rather take steps to ensure the establishment of peace in deed rather than words, continued the daily. While the Arabs consider the Cairo meeting as a way to persuade the Israelis to comply with the requirements of peace, Israeli leaders consider the summit as an Israeli-Arab strategic alliance against the opponents of the peace treaties, said the paper, which expressed hope that Washington would take moves in the wake of the summit to ensure Israel's withdrawal from Arab land and a halt of Jewish settlement programmes.

Al Dostour said that Jordan welcomed the Cairo summit as a means of exercising pressure on the Jewish state to implement the Oslo and Cairo agreements and to respond favourably to the requirements of peace on the other Arab-Israeli tracks. The paper said that Jordan's participation in the Cairo summit was a reaffirmation

of the Kingdom's pivotal role in the peace-making process, which has been stalled due to Israel's obstinacy. Despite the fact that Jordan has regained its sovereignty over its land and water resources, the Kingdom is keen on seeing peace prevailing throughout the whole region and on seeing Arab lands restored to their legitimate owners, said the paper.

There is no doubt that Israel's refusal to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) stems from its determination to ensure its perpetual hegemony on the Arab region, said Mohammad Kharrouh, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. Israel claims that it is targeted by the Arab states although it has reached peace with Egypt,

Arab demand over the past three decades in exchange for peace with the Jewish state. Egypt has regained Sinai following the Camp David accords; the Palestinians are getting back their territory with the start of the self-rule and Jordan is regaining sovereignty over its territory and water resources, continued the writer. What is left is to see the Israelis withdrawing from the Syrian and Lebanese territories so that peace can be comprehensive and lasting, he added.

As Jordanians expressed joy over the return of their land that has been under Israeli occupation, one can only express hope that Jordanian farmers will be able to cultivate the fertile areas of West Araba and the Jordan Valley which are still held by the Israelis.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Jordan and the Palestinians are about to conclude a peace treaty with Syria and Lebanon, noted the writer. He said the allegations that Israel is facing nuclear dangers are baseless and are being used as a tool to justify Israel's nuclear programmes with which it hopes to secure its domination of the Arab region's future. The writer said that the Arabs should not bury their heads in the sand and pretend that they are out of Israel's danger and they ought to realise that peace under constant threat is no peace at all.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i, described the closure of the occupied Arab lands in Palestine following the suicide bombing near Tel Aviv would not stop the resistance activities against Israel. Furthermore, said the writer, the building of settlements under the pre-

said Taher Awdan in Al Dostour. The presence of Israeli farmers on Jordanian land is painful for the Jordanian people who wish to see all occupied areas recovered. However, Israel's withdrawal was a source of pride for the Jordanians not only because they regained sovereignty on this land but also because the move constituted an important step towards the demise of Israel's dream of a greater Israel at the expense of Arab territories, added the writer.

Mohammad Kawash, a columnist in Al Dostour, said that the closure of the occupied Arab lands in Palestine following the suicide bombing near Tel Aviv would not stop the resistance activities against Israel. Furthermore, said the writer, the building of settlements under the pre-

text of creating a defence line for the Jewish state would not help the cause of peace. Israel should remember, said the writer, that it was largely due to suicide bombing attacks against the American and Israeli forces in Lebanon that these forces withdrew from Lebanese territory.

It is rather strange to hear the Israeli leaders' plan to maintain a blockade on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip at a time when they claim that they are seeking peace, said Taher Awdan in Al Dostour. The Israeli president has said that negotiations with the Palestinians should stop at a time when his government has issued orders for beefing up the Jewish settlements. These and other measures are not conducive to peace with the Palestinians and the Arab World at large but are bound to further escalate the cycle of violence, added the writer. He said that the Palestinians are provoked by the Israeli practices and it is impossible to contain the Palestinian people's anger and frustration which, he said, would be translated into more violent acts.

Commenting on the sharp rise in prices of various consumer commodities during the month of Ramadan, a columnist in Al Ra'i said while the limited-income groups try hard to cope with the rising prices, one can see that the wealthy tend to resort to extravagant spending on banquets during the holy month. It is strange to see that the month that has been dedicated for prayers and repentance transformed into a consumption fever causing the greedy merchants to practise manipulation and mass fortunes at the expense of the misery of the poor, said Nazib.

Honest image saves Venezuela's Caldera from crisis

By Gary Regenstrief
Reporter

CARACAS — The economy is slumping, inflation is soaring and poverty is on the rise, but Venezuelan President Rafael Caldera enjoys a remarkable measure of popularity after one year in office.

His anniversary Thursday caps a year of relative political calm following two years of tumult marked by riots, two military coup attempts and the impeachment of his predecessor Carlos Andres Perez.

Economic turmoil, however, has dogged Mr. Caldera since his inauguration and analysts warn that public support will soon evaporate unless he can show he is pulling Venezuela out of deep recession and a grave banking crisis.

The older statesman continues to win over 50 per cent approval ratings in opinion polls largely for his image of honesty in a nation whose two previous elected presidents face trial for corruption.

"He is credible, honourable, respectable and honest. This is a scandalous novelty in the presidency of the republic," historian Arturo Uslar Pietri told local television this week.

However, Mr. Caldera, who celebrated his 79th birthday last week, is criticised for merely plugging temporary holes in the economy and financial system rather than building more solid foundations.

Mr. Caldera, who served his first term 25 years ago, returned to last February with a mandate to ease his predecessor's economic reforms and crush the corruption that ravaged the faith of Venezuelans in their public institutions.

But last year economic output fell by 3.3 per cent, inflation hit 71 per cent, unemployment neared 10 per cent and the official poverty rate climbed to 52 per cent from 48 per cent. "I am disappointed and a little fed up," said Caracas taxi driver Pedro Mijares, 50. "I hoped he could change things. We don't see new solutions. And every week, prices go up."

"A country can put up with everything except hunger," Mr. Caldera, a former labour lawyer, blames the past.

"We have faced very difficult situations that are a result of grave errors committed in recent years," he said recently.

The septuagenarian imposed price and currency controls to brake a plunging bolivar and soaring inflation, in what critics described as a return to a discredited era of populism and economic protectionism. And he suspended key

constitutional freedoms, including the guarantee against search and arrest without a warrant, all in a bid to prevent price gouging and round up suspected criminals.

Seeking to protect the public's deposits, his government spent about \$6 billion, or half the 1994 budget, to bail out and eventually take over 16 sinking banks.

Leading economist Pedro Palma, a vice president with Booz Allen and Hamilton Inc, said the banking crisis has limited the government's ability to manoeuvre on other economic fronts, but he criticised the controls as a regressive step.

"He is giving a palliative to a patient who needs surgery," Palma said in an interview. "The controls were the most comfortable way to avoid social problems. The more time that passes the worse the consequences."

The government, he said, should take some tough measures now, such as speeding up privatisations and eliminating subsidies that are eating up funds that could be used in other sectors.

Mr. Caldera is best at issuing broad statements of intent, such as vague plans to reduce inflation and promote growth, but gets lower grades for saying how he will accomplish it or on taking political decisions that could spark public discontent.

"The crisis requires audacity and wisdom audacity to jump into the void, wisdom to calculate it," the daily El Nacional newspaper said in an editorial comment. "There is too much caution and not enough audacity."

Mr. Caldera, who holds a minority in Congress, has been able to govern thanks in large part to an opposition that has not been too obstructive.

Jesus Sanoja Hernandez, a political scientist and newspaper columnist, suggested that the gloves will come off ahead of December elections for mayors and governors when the opposition will seek to knock points off Mr. Caldera's popularity.

"They will look for the government's weak flank before December," he said.

The opposition has already begun to stir.

"The economic and social problems have worsened," Pedro Tabata Guzman, deputy parliamentary head for the opposition Democratic Action Party, told Reuters. "Caldera has counted on the support of all parties. They have given him a full year to draft a consistent and viable political plan that he has not achieved."

The water the Dutch love to hate

By Roger Slop

THE HAGUE — In normal times, the Netherlands is a peaceful, tranquil and slightly boring country. But this week it was different. A pitched battle was fought in the Dutch Delta. It was part of an endless war against an enemy the Dutch have known for centuries: water.

It is not easy to explain the situation to the peoples in the Middle East, who are used to handling every single drop of water as a precious treasure. We, on the other hand, are still vexed with the problem of how to get rid of millions and millions of gallons of water every day. Rain, rivers and the tides of the North Sea have shaped our country as much as our lives.

By now, more than 60 per cent of our country lies well below sea-level. With-out dikes and an elaborate drainage system, refined during long, long years, famous cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam would be in Atlantis.

Most of our land the Dutch cheated out of nature. And nature paid us back this week. While we were proud of having repaired our front door in the fight against the sea, the water sneaked in through the back door. The long and scenic Rhine River, and the less impressive, but still powerful Meuse, reclaimed their ancient rights in the Delta. They took what was theirs from time immemorial: a dashing rush from the Swiss Alps and the French Vosges to the North Sea.

Some quarter of a million Dutch and one million cattle had to hurry away from the swollen rivers. It was the largest evacuation operation in the history of the Netherlands. During the evacuation, a strange mood prevailed. The Dutch are known as very private people, with a reputation of stubborn disobedience to authorities, always whining about taxes and demanding financial compensations when something goes

wrong. But this week they left their houses and farms. It must have something to do with a deep-rooted relationship with water. In the Netherlands, toddlers learn to swim when they are four or five years old. Parents are encouraged to take their babies to the swimming pool. Not just for fun, but also out of necessity. Water is always around the corner and can be dangerous.

It has always been this way. When the Romans ruled most of the then-known world, the Germanic tribes in the Delta lived on earthen hills. In the Middle Ages, when Holland and parts of Belgium were just referred to as the Low Countries, the first primitive dikes were made of clay, wood and stones. Through the centuries the system was developed further, and it created a landscape that is called 'polder'. It is the only Dutch word (besides 'apartheid', but we prefer to forget that one) to penetrate without translation in English, French and German. Polders are flat and fruitful lands behind dikes, guarded by a system of canals and sluices. The famous Dutch windmills were not made for the benefits of tourism in the 20th century. They were the first pumping machines to keep the water level in the polders under control.

The ambiguous attitude from the Dutch to the water stems from the fact that water is not always the enemy. Every spring we say goodbye to the cold and mostly rainy winter by trekking along the meandering rivers. The same rivers that caused so much havoc this week, are at such moments the symbols of spring. The ancient villages along the dikes are cleaned, new-born lambs are jumping in the fields and the fruit trees are blossoming. In the summer, people crowd the sandy beaches and go sailing on the vast lakes in the north.

Water made us rich as well. In the seventeenth century, the so-called Golden



A local resident in a kayak receives a bag with shopping goods from a volunteer helper in the flooded streets of Koblenz-Neuendorf in Germany as in many European towns. Neighbourhood help such as a shopping service has become normal in these days, where residents of the flooded regions are expecting a longer period of being cut off from "normal" transportation (AFP photo)

Age of the Dutch Republic, merchants from Amsterdam commanded the high seas as far as Asia and Latin America. The impressive canal-houses in the centre of Amsterdam, capital of the Netherlands, are built on their power, trade and colonial loot. And the Delta is still a money-maker. Located on the mouth of the Rhine River, gateway to industrial giant Germany, Rotterdam has maintained its position as largest seaport of the world for decades. And in the green polders, cattle is raised. Dutch cows are as a breeding stock in high demand all over the world.

So most of the time there is a nice, harmonious cooperation between the Dutch and the water. We love it, but we will never trust it.

On Feb. 1, 1953, the sea attacked during a heavy rainstorm the Zeeland islands in the south-west of the country. The dikes

were to no avail in the fierce waves, and more than 1,850 people drowned. Never again, the Dutch vowed, and they started the ambitious Delta-plan. During more than twenty years they built a system of dams, dikes and floodgates. The last part of the project was finished in 1986, and it turned out that the whole project had cost about 10.4 billion Dutch guilders (more than 6 billion US\$).

But even this huge investment paid off. The Dutch were regarded worldwide as the experts in waterworks and orders for dike and harbour construction poured in, for example

from the Gulf.

This image has been severely tarnished by the recent floodings. After the completion of the Delta-plan the Dutch became over-confident and postponed reconstruction of the inland dikes along the great rivers again and again. The high costs and the pressure of powerful environmentalist groups, who feared that the typical river landscape would vanish, blocked plans to reinforce the dikes. This week, the Dutch paid the price.

There was, however, one big difference with 1953. Unlike then, we were not taken by surprise. It may sound strange but swollen

rivers move relatively slowly. When high waters are reported in southern Germany, it will take several days before the floods reach Holland.

So the Dutch could prepare for the water, and that is one of the reasons why there was no loss of life. But the damage is already, according to conservative estimates and given that the water has not fully receded, several hundreds of millions of dollars.

The whole world has seen the television images of the grim battle on the dikes. Especially the so-called 'bathtub' (polders between the Meuse and the Waal branch of the Rhine, six metres below the river level) were threatened. Soldiers and volunteers are struggling with sandbags, and seem to be winning, although the fight is far from over.

Still, the cloud has a silver lining. The eternally bickering Dutch show a rare sense of national unity these days. H.M. Queen Beatrix (who, by the way, is a close friend of H.M. King Hussein and H.M. Queen Noor) has visited the affected areas and was welcomed warmly by everyone, even by the staunchest republicans. Refugees live with families in non-affected areas, or in reception centres. Countless volunteers are working on the dikes or helping the refugees. A benefit concert by Dutch artists, broadcast by all the normally sharp competing stations, has already raised about 60 million U.S.S. Farmers on dry ground make room in their stables for the cattle of their colleagues. There are even reception centers from small pets.

A chain of bungalow parks offers room to refugees. The greatest attraction of these parks? A large, 'tropical' swimming pool. In Holland you simply can not avoid water, even if you want to.

Rogier Slop is Middle East editor for the Haagse Courant in the Hague, Netherlands.

Living below sea-level has its advantages. But also its dangers, as the floodings in the Netherlands showed last week. There is a long, obsessive relationship between the stubborn Dutch and the moody waters that surround them.

Because, although there may be truces, there will never be a lasting peace between the treacherous water and the tricky Dutch.

were long neglected by the impoverished Dutch, who tried to recover from five years of Nazi occupation. Even swimming abilities

Israel satisfied, Palestinians sceptical

(Continued from page 1)

East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

Israel and the PLO will resume talks Monday in Cairo and then Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat will come together on Thursday. Another meeting is set for Feb. 12 in Washington, where diplomats from the four parties will discuss everything from improving education to creating a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

Mr. Musa said there had been lengthy talks about settlement. "We insisted that this issue should be dealt with in accordance with the letter and spirit not only of the declaration of principles (for self-rule) but of international law," he said.

"The peace process was frozen with the Palestinians. Now it is no more frozen because of all the meetings that are going to be held soon," Mr. Musa said.

The four leaders recalled the missing link in the peace puzzle: Syria.

"They expressed the hope that the near future will witness the achievement of peace accords between Israel and Syria and Lebanon," the final communiqué said.

Mr. Musa said he was "sorry" that Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin claimed the summit was aimed against Syria.

"We support Syria on full withdrawal from the Golan Heights," he said referring to the sticking point in negotiations between Syria and Israel.

"We're sure that President Assad in Syria is very ready to enter peace agreements once the conditions ... are there."

"There is no other message than this one: we support the peace process in all its aspects, Syria, Lebanese, Palestinian..."

"Syria does not need convincing. They agree on peace but of course they stick to the principle we all agree on: land for peace, all for all."

Mr. Peres has said differences with Egypt over Israel's refusal to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty had been defused (see page 12). Mr. Musa later denied it. It was not a summit topic.

The PLO official said there was no agreement on the

release of some 6,000 Palestinian prisoners and Israeli troop redeployment before Palestinian elections. Israel has reservations about both issues in light of anti-peace deal guerrilla attacks.

Since the September 1993 interim PLO-Israel peace agreement, Israelis have killed 205 Palestinians and Palestinians have killed 112 Israelis.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher hailed the summit in Cairo as a "historic meeting" and welcomed its commitment to press ahead towards a full Middle East peace.

"I welcome the results of the summit that has been held in Cairo. It was an historic meeting," Mr. Christopher, who has made repeated trips to the Middle East in search of a settlement, said in a statement issued hours after the summit ended.

He said the meeting showed that the four leaders "are standing together in the pursuit of peace and they are also standing firmly together against those who would try to stop the march towards peace."

A senior U.S. official briefing reporters on condition he was not identified said the follow-up talks in Washington would focus on the three cooperation areas — political, economic and security — listed in the summit communiqué.

"What we'd like to do is work with them to find ways to begin to follow through on the declaration in terms of the commitment to developing cooperation and finding practical ways to express it," he said.

The official said the economic area would deal with preparations for next October's Middle East economic summit in Amman, the political area with promoting the peace process and the security area with "what more can be done there."

He said the Palestinians were making efforts to improve security in areas they control "but we feel that they can do more" to prevent guerrilla attacks on Israel by groups opposed to peace. He declined to say what new measures the Washington meetings might discuss.

The official insisted that the summit had been an

Egyptian initiative but admitted that U.S. officials had discussed it at length with Egypt before the meeting was announced.

"We had to reinject momentum into this process, we had to recapture the initiative on the process, we had to make it clear that those who are working so hard to destroy this process through violence and other means couldn't succeed," he said.

Although Syria, which has yet to sign a peace deal with Israel, will not take part in the Washington meetings, the official confirmed Damascus reports that Syrian Ambassador Walid Al Mouallem would return to Washington shortly.

Mr. Mouallem went back to Damascus following talks with his Israeli counterpart in Washington in December in which the chiefs of staff of the Syrian and Israeli armed forces took part. Syria said the talks produced no results.

The official said U.S. officials would have intensive discussions with Mr. Mouallem on his return, but declined to say if the Syrian envoy would be meeting his Israeli opposite number, Itamar Rabinovich.

As expected, Mr. Arafat's opponents were quick to condemn the Cairo summit.

Islamic Jihad said in the Arabic daily Al Hayat that the meeting was meant to salvage the sagging popularity of Mr. Rabin's government, "which is stumbling under the strikes of the crusaders."

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, another Syria-based group, said the unprecedented meeting was "incapable of refloating the Oslo (autonomy) accord or saving the separate deal" with Israel.

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"The summit was aimed at pressuring Arafat to speed up his schemes for waging a final battle against the opposition groups and the mujahideen (holy fighters) of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad ...," Mr. Mustafa told Reuters in an interview.

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A Palestinian woman and her child taking cover from the sun under an umbrella as they sit in the women's area at the Al Aqsa and Omar mosques in Jerusalem's Old City (AFP photo)

Israeli siege keeps faithful away

(Continued from page 1)

state (Israel) last longer?" "Muslims, I'm sure that Israel will finally be destroyed and the (Jewish) settlements will be your spoils," said Sheikh Sabri.

Near Bethlehem, border police turned back Palestinians trying to attend prayers in Jerusalem.

"I want to pray," 65-year-old Sakhi Taktak told one of the policemen.

"It's forbidden," the policeman replied in Arabic. "No," Mr. Taktak pleaded. "I have to go to the prayers because it is Ramadan."

But the policeman pushed him aside.

"There is no other government in the world that would prevent people from praying," Mr. Taktak grumbled, adding he would try to sneak in through the hills.

Later Friday, about 200 Palestinians held a protest march near the West Bank village of Tormas Awwa and uprooted a fence around what they said were 300 dunums of land recently confiscated by Israel. Israeli soldiers watched from a nearby hilltop but did not intervene.

Jalal Aref, clutching Israeli-issued papers he said proved his ownership of part of the land, said he would fight the confiscation in courts. "Without my land I am nothing," said Mr. Aref, 60.

Jamal Musa, the village mukhtar, said that by the time Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) discuss the permanent status of the West Bank, "there will be no more land left."

Final status talks are to begin by May 1996, two years after autonomy was established in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank enclave of Jericho.

Sheikh's video produced in cow

(Continued from page 12)

plot," the prosecution says. Ms. Stewart suggested that the disappearance of the watermelon proved that agents took what they wanted from the apartment, regardless of the specifications of the search warrant. The warrant allowed agents to seize anything relating to a jihad.

The watermelon was in a first set of photographs the FBI took at the apartment but was missing in the second. So were some oranges, she said, although she has yet to tell the jury about that.

"That I'm saving," she said with a smile.

The trial, which began Jan. 9, recessed until Monday. Opening statements began Jan. 30.

FBI Agent David Frase was questioned Thursday by the cleric's lawyer and said it did not know that Islam teachings forbid making a paying interest on bank deposits and observant Muslim do not put money in traditional bank accounts.

On Wednesday, an age said the FBI believes Sheikh Abdul Rahman is an "ideological" leader, "jihad" groups in California, Texas, Michigan, New York and New Jersey.

U.N. rights rapporteur resigns

(Continued from page 12)

the West Bank to make way for Palestinian elections, must be speeded up. Foreign governments must fulfill their promises of aid to the Gaza Strip, he said.

He warned otherwise there would be an "explosion" in frustration and hatred, fomented by both Muslim and Jewish extremists who are opposed to compromise.

"I would like to underline that I was profoundly shocked by the oppressive atmosphere that reigned in most of the occupied territories we visited," he said.

He said in general terms that it was best to criticise human rights violations, but that the Mideast peace process offered an alternative way of promoting respect for basic freedoms.

"I am disappointed that there doesn't seem to be any effort to understand that the

political route is possible," said of the U.N. commissaire. Mr. Felber said the commission would have to decide if it wanted to appoint another special investigator to succeed him. He added separate General Assembly committees which scrutinise Israeli abuses should continue its work.

Israel traditionally cor under a long file from U.N.'s human rights was dog. Mr. Felber's investigation was under a procedure reserved for the worst violators, including Iraq, Vietnam and Sudan.

The International Jur Commission, a respected body of legal experts, accused Felber of betraying victim human rights abuse. Amnesty International said scrutiny of Israel must continue combat widespread terror and abuse.

Indyk criticises Syria

(Continued from page 12)

peacekeeping force on the Golan Heights.

Questioned by Sen. Hank Brown (Republican-Colorado), who presided over the hearing, Mr. Indyk said the U.S. commitment to consider providing troops for a force to police a peace agreement between Israel and Syria dated to the Bush administration and was reaffirmed by Mr. Clinton when he took office.

Mr. Indyk said it was made clear to both sides that any

consideration of provi troops would be "in con sion with Congress."

He said Israel and "have only just begun di of security arrangements... and this issue not been broached by side."

On the touchy quest Jerusalem, Mr. Indyk warned Congress that acted to recognise the capital of Israel it "explode the peace p (and) put us out of bu as a facilitator."

Iran seeks to curb outflow of hard currency

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran is fighting to curb the flow abroad of hundreds of millions of dollars in hard currency each year that is deepening the country's economic crisis.

According to central bank governor Mohsen Nurbakhsh, only \$800 million of the country's estimated \$3.2 billion in hard currency earnings from non-oil exports last year returned to Iran, even though many of the export companies are associated with the government.

The country, meanwhile, is on the brink of bankruptcy and over-burdened by a short and medium-term foreign debt of more than \$30 billion.

The authorities have resorted to a carrot-and-stick policy to force exporters to return their capital to the country.

Mr. Nurbakhsh said the government now required that exporters return at least 50 per cent of their hard currency earnings within four months of any transaction, or face legal action.

He also promised that interest would be added to hard currency deposits at Iranian banks in line with international rates.

Parliament asked the government Monday to step up the fight against the smuggling of hard currency and merchandise that has been on the rise in the past two years.

The request was made despite the mounting efforts by the government to cut back on imports.

To save hard currency and

pay back its hefty foreign debt, Iran sharply curbed imports last year to around \$10 billion from \$25 billion in 1992.

The shock treatment however led to the creation of a parallel semi-legal system of transactions, which functioned independently of the country's banking system.

The volume of trade within this system is estimated at between \$3 to \$5 billion, according to parliamentary documents quoted by the official news agency IRNA.

"This system serves as a safety valve to prevent the industrial sector and the bazaar from suffocating and to allow the minimum imports of vital goods," said a European economic expert in Tehran. "But at the same time it harms the government's efforts to reimburse its debt and emerge from the financial crisis."

The trafficking of hard currency and merchandise — mainly from Arab Gulf states — however has taken on such a huge proportion that many government organisations have also been implicated.

"It would be very difficult to reorganise the system as long as the parallel system keeps growing," the expert said.

But the war declared on hard currency trafficking already appears to have had some success.

The authorities seem to have already managed to stem the collapse of the rial, which lost 40 per cent of its value against major foreign

currencies last month.

The Iranian currency has risen slightly against the dollar and gold on the black market since Monday, while the rate of the greenback officially remains frozen.

Meanwhile, Iran has sentenced a factory owner and two managers of other businesses to public floggings and fines for refusing to sell goods at rates set by the government.

The announcement was made by Justice Minister Ismail Shoushtari and broadcast by Tehran Radio. It underscored government resolve to deal firmly with violators.

Mr. Shoushtari heads a new committee trying to curb blackmarketing inflation that has led to a public outcry.

The radio, monitored in Cyprus, quoted him as saying that the director-general of Golan, a company in central Arak province that produces shortening, was sentenced to 30 floggings and ordered to pay more than 403 million rials (\$230,000) for illegal distribution and selling at inflated rates.

The minister said that the owner of a tire factory was fined 33 million rials (\$19,000) for refusing to sell at the official rates, and that the manager of a cooperative store was fined 11 million rials (\$6,000) for "profiteering".

He said all three were tried and convicted over the past few days. None of the alleged violators was identified by name.

Lebanon plans new oil refinery policy

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's oil minister said he will propose setting up a corporation with state, foreign and private Lebanese capital to re-launch the country's state-owned refinery industry.

Outlining his plans for a new policy for the refining sector, Industry and Oil Minister Asad Rizk said the proposed corporation would have an initial capital of \$200 million and would operate under a BOT (build, operate, transfer) contract.

It would spend up to \$1 billion to repair a disused 25,000 barrels per day (b/d) refinery at the northern port of Tripoli and expand its capacity to 50,000 b/d, and to build a 100,000 b/d state of the art refinery at Zahran.

The Zahran plant would be expandable at a low cost to 130,000-150,000 b/d to allow Lebanon to export high quality refined products into the 21st century, Mr. Rizk said in a recent interview.

He told Reuters he would announce the proposal in parliament in February or March. It differs from a plan he presented last year for a joint venture focussing on the Tripoli plant alone.

Mr. Rizk said the ministry rethought Lebanon's refining strategy on the basis of the a six-month study last year by the French company Beipic Framlab. It was asked if Lebanon should keep importing refined products or refine imported crude, and whether reexporting refined products was feasible.

Lebanon has no oil reserves and imports its requirements of 80,000 b/d of refined products. The Tripoli refinery damaged during the 1975-90 civil war is closed and the 17,000-b/d Zahran refinery has been scrapped.

"The first answer (of the Beipic Framlab study) is that it's more feasible to rehabilitate and extend the Tripoli refinery and to build a new refinery at Zahran than to import refined product, Mr. Rizk said.

The state would have about 25 per cent of the new corporation's initial capital, 50 per cent would go to foreign investors and 25 per cent would be raised on the Beirut stock market.

The study showed that the Tripoli plant could start making money in two or three years, Mr. Rizk said.

It showed that with a \$150 million investment the refinery could start producing 25,000 b/d in about 18 months from its existing distillation unit and the addition of another unit could raise this to 50,000 b/d in three years.

Construction of a 100,000 b/d refinery at Zahran would take five or six years and cost \$700 million, Mr. Rizk said.

"If we build this refinery in the south we will only have to invest a little more money to reach 130,000 or 150,000 b/d by 2005 or 2010, meaning that the output of the two refineries would leave an export surplus.

Asked if he had a company in mind to take up the 50 per cent foreign shareholding in the proposed corporation Mr. Rizk said: "Many American, British, German, Italian..."

Mr. Rizk said two companies, British and Irish, are interested in carrying out new seismic surveys in Lebanon.

Dollar to strengthen against mark, yen in the near-term — Merrill Lynch

The following report, covering the period from Thursday, Jan. 26, 1995 until Wednesday, Feb. 1, 1995, is provided by Nassir Nabulsi, private client group at Merrill Lynch — Dubai.

Overview

Fundamental View: The Mexican peso was driven to a record low on Monday — closing in New York at N.P./U.S.\$ 6.35 vs 5.74 on Friday as news over the weekend indicated that support in Congress for President Clinton's \$40 billion loan guarantee package was decreasing. On Tuesday, the peso was again under pressure trading as low as N.P./U.S.\$ 6.47, when President Clinton announced a new plan for Mexico that would not require Congressional approval. This sparked a rally for the peso and the dollar, which brought the peso's value back up to N.P./U.S.\$ 5.75. Clinton's new plan will utilise \$20 billion in swap facilities and securities guarantees from the Exchange Stabilisation Fund and the Federal Reserve.

According to the Treasury, these funds will be used to facilitate the restructuring of Mexico's short-term debt into longer maturities in order to ease the liquidity problem and stabilise the peso. Mexico needed these loan guarantees to meet its obligations or roll over \$26 billion in short-term debt that matures this year. Though the Exchange Stabilisation Fund includes U.S. dollars, Deutschmarks, Japanese yen and Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), we do not expect any significant foreign exchange sales because the Treasury can get dollars by borrowing from the Fed and using the foreign exchange as collateral.

We maintain our forecast for the dollar to strengthen against the mark and the yen in the near-term as the Fed raises interest rates and short-term interest rate differentials clearly favour the dollar. Our three- and six-months forecast for the yen JPY/USD 105 and for the mark is DM/USD 1.60-1.65.

Technical View: The combination of improving sentiment, oversold short-term momentum, and the proximity of support resulted in a firm dollar last week. Particular strength against the European currencies and the Australian dollar allowed the U.S. dollar index to rally 0.2 per cent for its first gain in three weeks. Short term momentum is bottoming, suggesting that the index is positioned for further strength. Thus, even though medium term oscillators are peaking, the prospects for a rally are likely to at least temporarily arrest this topping process.

As a result, we will have to monitor the quality of any nearby rally since the next short term peak may also be a more important medium term top. Support is at 86.90, then the October low at 84.91. Important resistance remains in the 89.00-91.00 area.

Japanese yen

Fundamental View: The Japanese yen is currently trading near JPY/USD 99.4 but we think there is a good case for yen weakness over the next few months. Our three- and six-month outlook is for the yen to be trading near JPY/USD 105. Reasons for yen depreciation include a widening short-term interest rate spread between the U.S. and Japan and a slowdown in portfolio capital flows out of the U.S.

In the U.S., growth continues to be strong-fourth-quarter GDP came in at 4.5 per cent rate and we expect the Fed to tighten interest rates by 100 basis points over the next couple of months. Conversely, the Kobe earthquake in Japan will dampen growth in the near-term and force the

Bank of Japan to keep rates low until the third of fourth quarter.

The spread between U.S. and Japanese short-rates, currently around 380 basis points, could widen to 500 basis points over the next few months. That would give the dollar considerable support. Another source of support for the dollar is the slowdown in net portfolio capital outflows from the U.S. In 1990-92, these outflows averaged less than \$12.5 billion per quarter or \$50 billion at an annual rate. In 1993, outflows surged and were as high as \$41 billion in the third-quarter, or nearly \$165 billion at an annual rate. However, by the second-half of 1994, outflows began to slow materially and are now close to their 1992-93 pace. Indeed, it is possible that these outflows will actually reverse in the first-quarter if Americans investors decide to repatriate some of their international investments.

Despite our near-term optimism for the dollar against the yen, we continue to look for yen appreciation over the longer-term due to current account dynamics. Our 12-month forecast is JPY/USD 95.

Technical View: The Japanese yen gained 0.1 per cent versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended Jan. 27. The sentiment background for the currency is near oversold. Benchmark support remains at 100.80-101.80 Y/U.S.\$ and, with short term momentum peaking, that support may be tested again over the near term.

However, medium term oscillators are nearing oversold readings, suggesting that any nearby weakness may be the prelude to a more sustainable rally (supported by both short, and medium term oscillators) later on.

If so, this would suggest a more severe challenge of the 96-97 area (and possibly beyond) once any nearby weakness runs its course.

Deutschmark

Fundamental View: The dollar rallied against the mark after President Clinton announced his new aid package to Mexico and is currently trading near DM/USD 1.52. For some time now, the Deutschmark has been benefiting from a "flight to quality" that began with the Mexican crisis and carried over into other countries where current account or budget imbalances, political problems, or earthquakes were a cause for investor anxiety.

However, as turmoil over the Mexican crisis subsides and the Fed raises interest rates, we think the dollar will continue to recover since U.S. short-rates will offer considerable premium to German short-rates. Currently, the spread between U.S. and German short-term rates around 110 basis points and could expand by another 50-to-100 basis points over the next few months.

We expect the Fed to raise interest rates by 100 basis points over the next two months while Germany is unlikely to raise the discount or the Lombard rate until the second half of this year. Indeed, there is a chance that the Bundesbank may even keep the repo rate fixed until after the May French elections, though it is more likely they will return to a variable repo at one of their next 4 meetings. We maintain our forecast for the mark to be trading at DM/USD 1.60 in three-months, 1.65 in six-months and 1.60 in 12-month's time.

Technical View: The Deutschmark fell 0.2 per cent against the U.S. dollar last week. Sentiment continues to deteriorate and is solidly in neutral territory. The currency has now retraced most of its October-December decline and, as a result, medium term oscillators are attempting to reverse

from down to up. However, short term momentum is peaking, suggesting that the currency is positioned for a near term decline. If so, this would serve to relieve the building medium term pressures and carry these oscillators to better oversold levels.

In the meantime, nearby resistance exists at 1.492-1.509 DM/U.S.\$ At this point, 1.58 is benchmark support, although there is interesting support at 1.542-1.562. Against the yen, the D-mark fell 0.3 per cent last week. Despite the fact that medium term oscillators did not reach oversold territory, they seem to have turned up again. However, short term oscillators are overbought. This, coupled with resistance at 66.60, may allow for a correction over the near term. In the meantime, there is important trendline support near 63.50-64.00.

Pound sterling

Fundamental View: The British pound dropped a few cents to trade around USD/GBP 1.57 after rising to a two-month high against the dollar at USD/GBP 1.60. The pound also weakened against the mark, dropping to DM/GBP 2.40. There was heightened expectations of another monetary tightening at the next meeting between the Bank of England Governor Eddie George and the Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke on Feb. 2 following inflation and unemployment data releases. December RPI was stronger than expected, while the fall in unemployment was much sharper than anticipated by the market. However, chancellor Clarke was quick to dampen expectations of an imminent rate hike.

We continue to think that another rate increase is not likely before March and expect rates to increase by 100 basis points in two 50 basis point increments over the next few months.

Apart from the monetary meeting on Feb. 2, the other major focus for the markets will be the release of the Bank of England's quarterly inflation report. The spread of the U.K. over German nominal rates varies from 160 basis points at the short end to 134 basis points at the long end.

With U.K. rates expected to rise while German rates on hold (at least for now), the widening interest differential is a positive for the pound and should push the pound toward our 12-month forecast of DM/GBP 2.50. However, as we expect the dollar to rebound against the mark over the next few months, the pound is likely to give back some of its gains against the dollar.

We expect the pound to be trading near USD/GBP 1.56 in 12-month's time.

Technical View: The British pound fell less than 0.1 versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended Jan. 27. Sentiment is deteriorating and moving toward overbought readings. While short term momentum has an upward bias, these oscillators are overbought and there is evidence of a near term peak.

If so, this would suggest that the rally of recent weeks has only a little more life left in it. At the same time, medium term indicators are 'improving'; thus, any nearby weakness will probably postpone the creation of an important bottom.

A rally decisively through 1.602 U.S.\$/L could well signal an eventual challenge of the 1994 high at \$1.638. Nearby support is \$1.584, with second support at \$1.561.

Against the DM, sterling gained 0.2 per cent last week. Despite recent deterioration, momentum is still only neutral, suggesting an upcoming test of the August low at 2.378. Resistance exists at 2.435, then above 2.46.

eanuts



Andy Capp



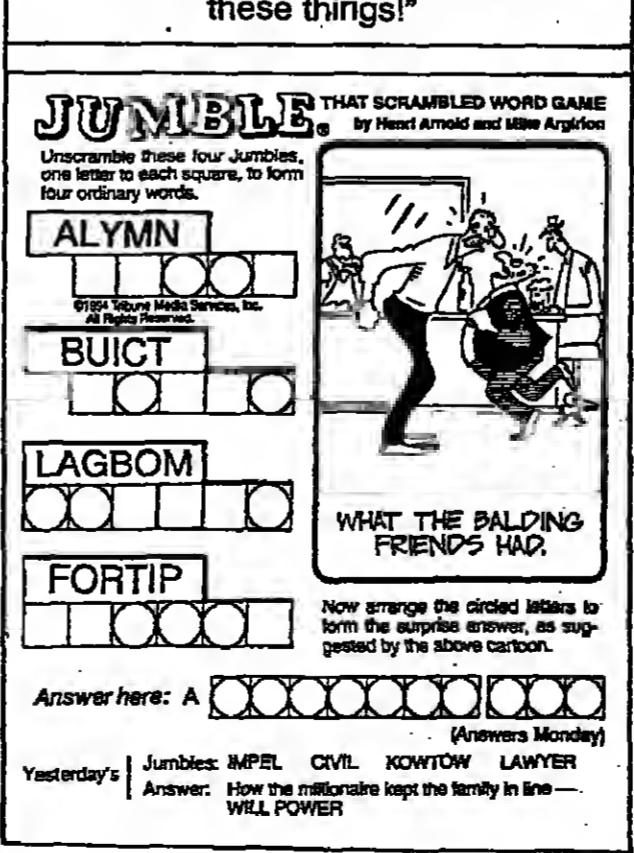
Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

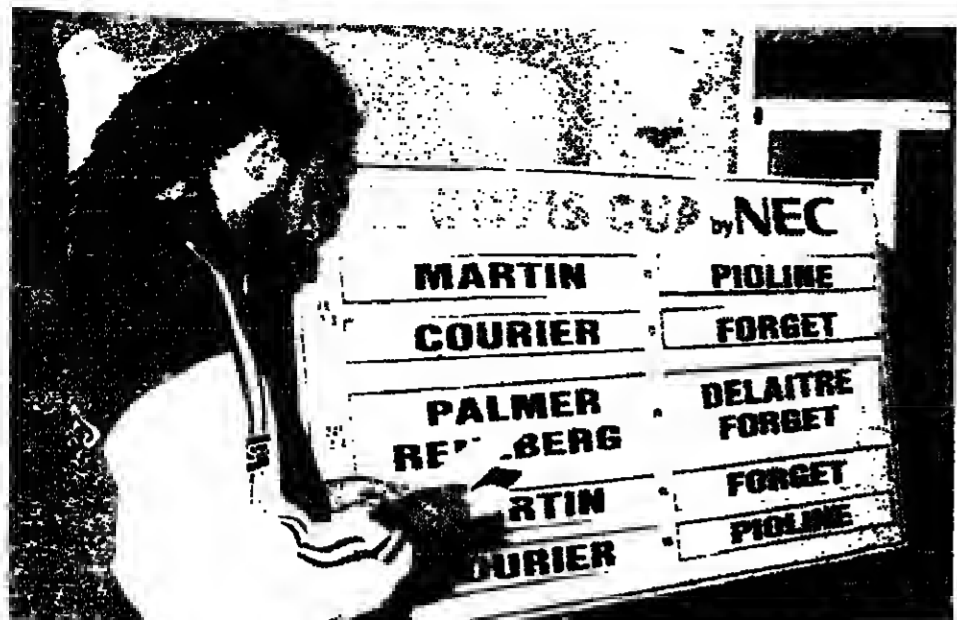


JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword





Yannick Noah, captain of the French Davis Cup tennis team, looks at the opening round pairings on Thursday. The French team will take on the U.S. in opening round action (AFP photo).

U.S. Davis Cup coach not underestimating France

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (AP) — Tom Gullikson keeps hearing the United States should have no trouble against France this weekend in the opening round of the Davis Cup.

Gullikson, the U.S. Davis Cup captain, wants no part of it. He knows what happened in 1991, when the French beat the Americans in the Davis Cup final.

"Bookmakers make the odds," he said Thursday. "That really doesn't concern us."

"Whether we're playing a team that we're supposed to dominate or that is supposed to dominate us doesn't really matter. We're coming in here to play our best tennis."

And if that happens, French captain Yannick Noah suggests, it could be a rout for the United States.

Noah also was captain of the French team that won the 1991 Davis Cup. That squad included three of the four players currently representing France — Guy Forget, Olivier Delaite and Arnaud Boetsch. The other player is Cedric Pioline, who is playing instead of Henri Leconte.

"It's a very good situation for us," Noah said. "We don't have anything to lose. We're playing a team that is supposed to beat us and that

is playing before their crowd," Noah said. "We can very well lose 5-0, but we could just as well win 3-2 or 4-1."

With Australian Open finalists Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras taking time off, the American team consists of Jim Courier and Todd Martin and the doubles pair of Jared Palmer and Richey Reneberg.

Pioline, a 1993 U.S. Open finalist, will try to get the French in the opening match against Martin at the 6,000-seat bayfront auditorium. Guy Forget will face Courier in the second match.

Palmer and Reneberg, winners of the Australian Open doubles title last week, will face Forget and Olivier Delaite in Saturday's doubles.

Sunday's singles matchups on the indoor carpet surface that both teams said favors the Americans are Martin vs. Forget and vs. Pioline.

On paper, the United States should have no problem advancing to the second round against the winner of the first-round match between Czech Republic and Italy. Courier is No. 12 in the world and Martin is No. 13, while Forget and Pioline are ranked 37th and 50th, respectively.

Noah showed how important Saturday's doubles may be to France's chances when he paired Forget with Delaite to face Palmer and Reneberg, who are No. 1 after their first Grand Slam title.

The Germany-Croatia match is one of eight first-round world group matches being played this week.

South Africa, playing in the World Group for the first time, plays host to Australia in Durban. South Africa fields Wayne Ferreira and Marcos Ondruska in singles and Piet Norval and Gary Muller in doubles, while Australia counters with Patrick Rafter, Richard Fromberg and doubles partners Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde.

Defending champion Sweden plays Denmark in Copenhagen. Sweden is going with the same team that beat Russia for the title in December: Stefan Edberg and Magnus Larsson in singles and Jan Apell and Jonas Bjorkman in doubles.

Russia, which faces Belgium in Brussels, also has its 1994 final lineup: Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Alexander Volkov, Andrei Olhovskiy and Andrei Chesnokov.

Other matchups include the Netherlands vs.

Mansell signs for McLaren

LONDON (AFP) — The most kept secret in motor racing was revealed Friday when it was confirmed that former World Champion Nigel Mansell will contest in 1995 Formula One championship for McLaren Mercedes.

The 41-year-old Mansell, who will partner Finn Mika Hakkinen, will be competing in his 13th full Formula One season, but insists "you can't stop the fire burning if you love driving."

He added he was motivated like never before and was driving to win, not to wind down his career. "Winning," he said, "you taste, feel and sense it, and you can't walk away from it."

He said he was excited by the fact there were new regulations, with new cars and new engines, and that driver weight was no longer important. He has usually been the heaviest driver giving a tiny but vital speed handicap.

Mansell noted McLaren had won 104 Grands Prix and he had won 31. "We have been competitors and enemies. When they won I usually lost. Now it's like starting a new career."

McLaren International Managing Director Ron Dennis said it had taken five weeks of complicated negotiations to agree the deal with Mansell, after a catastrophic first meeting.

In the end, he revealed, they had stuck over the last \$100,000 of the deal, and finally agreed to give it to charity. Mansell adding that his half share would probably go to charities near his gold club near Exeter, in south western England. No figure for the deal was announced, but there was speculation Mansell will get five million pounds for the season.

Dennis had said last year he did not employ drivers he did not understand, and he didn't understand Nigel Mansell.

At the announcement, he explained that Mansell had a split personality and that at the first meeting he only saw Mansell's public image, the flamboyant race winner.

After some straight talking, he said, he found "the real person."

Rockets end Utah Jazz road streak

HOUSTON (R) — Home or away, all good things must end in the NBA.

The Houston Rockets squelched the Utah Jazz's assault on the National Basketball Association record for successive wins on the road on Thursday, and the Seattle SuperSonics ended the Orlando Magic's home-court perfection this season.

In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon scored 41 points and the NBA champion Rockets opened the fourth quarter with a decisive 28-12 run to snap the 15-game road win streak of the Utah Jazz, 121-101.

Utah was attempting to tie the all-time road winning streak of 16 games held by the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers. Utah's 15-game road winning streak is the second longest in NBA history.

"Everyone knows they have a great team," said Utah coach Jerry Sloan. "We had a great run. That was a great streak."

Olajuwon hit 15-of-22 shots from the field and 11-of-15 from the foul lines. It was his sixth 40-point game of the season.

"The biggest thing is getting the win," said Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich.

Sam Cassell scored 11 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter and sparked the decisive run with three 3-pointers. Houston hit 16 of 22 shots from the field, including seven 3-pointers, in the fourth quarter when they outscored Utah 46-30. Houston hit 62.7 per cent from the field for the game.

"Well, they hit six, seven straight 3-pointers, not much you can do about that," said Utah guard Jeff Hornacek, who was hounded defensively by Houston's Vernon Maxwell and hit just 2-of-11 shots from the field.

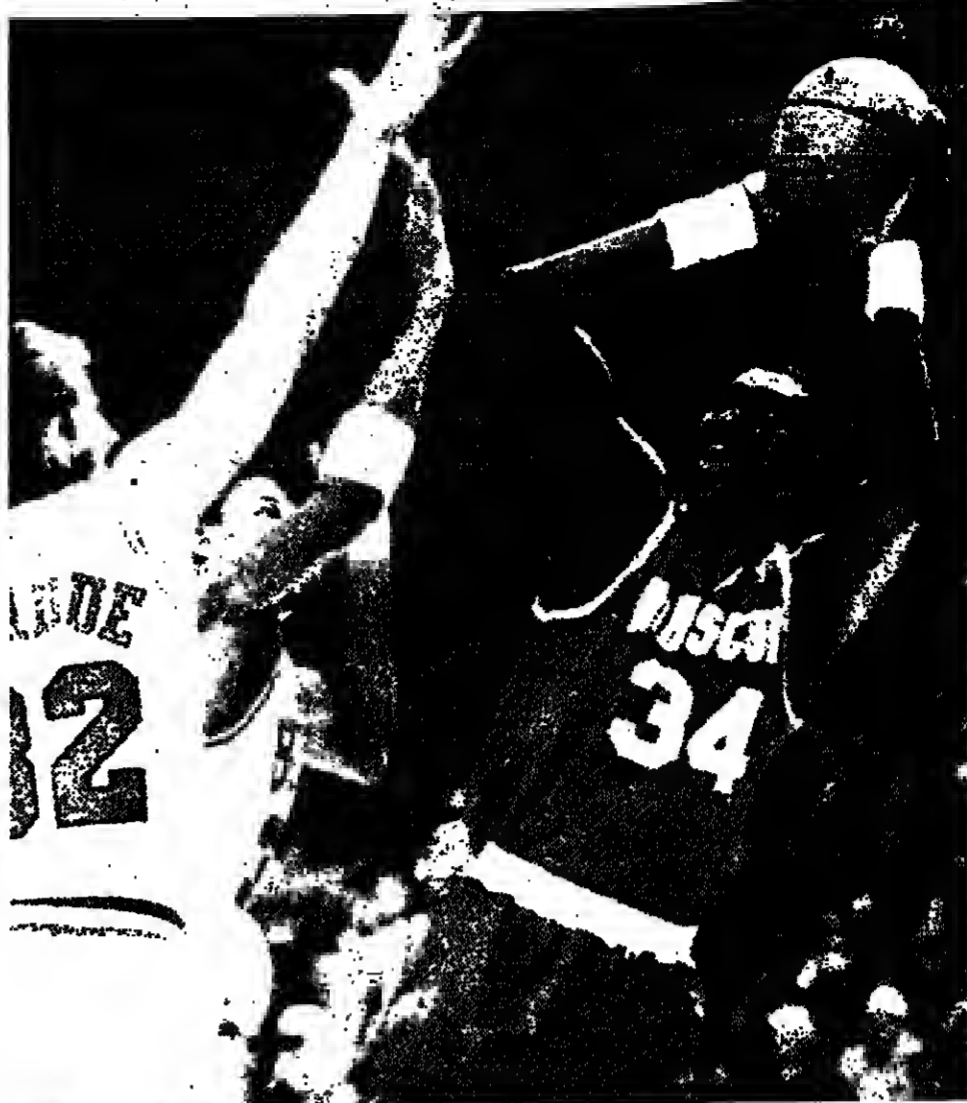
"I don't think we played that great, but we were in it right until they hit everything."

Karl Malone led Utah with 26 points. Utah's John Stockton, who became the NBA's all-time assists leader Wednesday, had 17 points and five assists.

Orlando suffered its first loss at home this season, 106-103 to Seattle, but Magic coach Brian Hill wasn't crying.

"The streak was nothing but a positive," said Hill. "It's not sad that we lost, we're still 21-1 at home."

Gary Payton scored 26



Houston Rockets star Hakeem Olajuwon #34 makes a hasty shot under double coverage by two opponents (AFP photo).

points and Anfernee Hardaway missed two critical free throws with 2.1 seconds left, the second deliberately, as the SuperSonics beat Orlando 106-103.

Orlando lost for the first time in 22 home games despite 39 points and 15 rebounds from Shaquille O'Neal. The Magic, who came in the last remaining unbeaten team at home, had won 24 straight at Orlando Arena dating back to last season.

The game featured 13 ties and 18 lead changes and no team had a lead greater than seven points.

Detlef Schrempf added 22 points for Seattle and Sam Perkins had 14 rebounds as the Sonics won their seventh straight road game. Seattle won both meetings between the teams this season, including a 124-84 trouncing at Seattle on December 17.

"If we're going to lose at

home to break the streak, at least it was to a good basketball team," Hill said.

"We knew it would be a hard game," Seattle's Shawn Kemp said. "We just stepped up and accepted the challenge."

Orlando, which made just 20-of-32 free throws, played without forward Horace Grant, who missed the game due to pain in his power back. Nick Anderson of the Magic scored 14 points before leaving with a wrist injury.

Orlando fell into a tie with the Phoenix Suns for the best record in the league, 35-9.

At Detroit, Joe Dumars hit a 3-pointer with 2:23 remaining to give the Pistons the lead for good and added a free throw in the closing seconds to seal an 85-83 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Grant Hill led the Pistons with 22 points and Dumars

finished with 17.

The loss was the fourth in a row for the Cavaliers, who are 3-7 since losing star guard Mark Price to injury.

Terrell Brandon led the Cavaliers with 15 points.

In Sacramento, Walt Williams scored 20 points and the Kings held Chicago to just 24 points in the second half to defeat the Bulls 88-68.

Chicago scored only 11 points in the third quarter and 13 in the fourth quarter. Mitch Richmond had 17 points and Spud Webb added 14 for the Kings.

Scottie Pippen led Chicago with 22 points.

RESULTS

Detroit 85, Cleveland 83
Seattle 106, Orlando 103
Houston 121, Utah 101
Sacramento 88, Chicago 68

Pierce bows out of Toray tennis

TOKYO (Agencies) — Australian Open champion Mary Pierce was beaten Friday by Magdalena Malecva in the quarter-finals of the \$806,250 Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament here.

The 20-year-old French player, who clinched her first Grand Slam title at Melbourne last Sunday, went down 3-6, 6-1, 3-6.

The Bulgarian also beat Pierce in their first encounter in the Federation Cup in Frankfurt last year.

Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez of Spain was upset by Japan's top player Kimiko Date 0-6, 6-2, 6-3 in the quarter-finals of the Pan Pacific Open women's tennis tournament Friday.

Despite an easy first set, the top seed, who has lost some form since her Wimbledon triumph, played erratically, with unforced errors in both forehand and backhand ground strokes.

The 24-year-old Date became more and more aggressive as she broke fourth-ranked Martinez to lead 5-1 in the final set.

After falling on two match points, 10th-ranked Date finally sealed victory when Martinez's backhand return went long.

In the semifinals Date will meet eighth seed Iva Majoli of Croatia, who earlier beat unseeded Japanese Naoko Sawamatsu 4-6, 6-3, 6-0.

American Lindsay Davenport, seeded third, reached Saturday's semifinals when she came from behind to beat sixth seed Anke Huber of Germany 2-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Medvedeva inspired by pop singer

Natalia Medvedeva credited pop singer Cliff Richard with the inspiration for her



Mary Pierce

quarterfinal victory Friday in the \$107,500 Amway Classic women's tennis championship in Auckland, New Zealand.

Medvedeva, the seventh seed from Ukraine, defeated Australian Rachel McQuillan 6-4, 6-1 after attending a Richard concert the previous night and also praising with the singer — a keen amateur player.

Medvedeva now will play No. 2 seed and defending champion Ginger Helgeson Nielsen of the United States in the semifinals.

Helgeson Nielsen had a walkover Friday after her fifth-seeded Chinese oppo-

nent Fang Li withdrew from the tournament after suffering a knee injury in a doubles match.

Medvedeva said she had been lifted by Richard's attitude.

"I was really impressed because he gives everything, he gives 100 per cent, and that's what makes him the greatest," she said.

"I learned from that I was trying to do what he did last night, which was to give my best."

Medvedeva trailed 2-4 in the first set but then won 10 of the last 11 games after harnessing her groundstrokes in difficult windy conditions.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Aouita, Cason skipping Millrose

NEW YORK (AFP) — Former world record holder Said Aouita of Morocco and world indoor 60m record holder Andre Cason are among five top athletes who have dropped out of the Millrose Games here, officials have said. Aouita, making a comeback at age 35 after three years out of the sport, was to have raced in the 3,000m but bowed out because of bronchitis. No reason for Cason's departure was given. Butch Reynolds, the world outdoor record-holder at 400 metres, decathlon world champion and world record-holder Dan O'Brien, and Joe Greene, the 1992 Olympic long jump bronze medalist, were among the late scratches for the games at Madison Square Garden. Meet organisers said that both Reynolds and Greene had hamstring injuries, and O'Brien a strained quadriceps.

Salenko wants to play in Japan

MOSCOW (R) — Striker Oleg Salenko, out of favour with both Valencia and the Russian national team, has denounced the Spanish side's coach as incompetent and said he would like to play in Japan. Salenko — who set a World Cup record last year by scoring five times against Cameroon — told Sport Express newspaper that Brazil's World Cup-winning coach Carlos Alberto Parreira was to blame for Valencia's woes. Valencia is 11th in the Spanish first division, nine points behind leaders Real Madrid.

Mandela receives Jesse Owens Global Award

NEW YORK (AP) — South African President Nelson Mandela was announced as winner of the second Jesse Owens Global Award, given biennially to an individual "who has made a significant and lasting contribution of enduring quality to society from a background of sports." The Global Award also goes to a person who has "shown distinguished leadership in the field through personal example of work, deeds or written and spoken statements over a period of years." Mandela was an amateur boxer in South Africa as a younger, winner of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize. Mandela struggled to end apartheid in South Africa and move his country toward democracy.

Accola crashes into trainer

VEYSONNAZ, Switzerland (AFP) — Swiss skier Paul Accola was rushed to hospital after a bad collision with coach Fritz Zueger. Accola, the 1992 World Cup winner, was reported to have torn ligaments and damaged his right knee cartilage after hurtling into Zueger at full speed. Zueger broke seven ribs.

Stoichkov and Cruyff in feud

BARCELONA (AFP) — European Player of the Year Hristo Stoichkov and Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff are no longer on speaking terms, and the Bulgarian striker's future at the Spanish club is in doubt. "There is no question of me packing my bags now," said Stoichkov, "but whether I will be here next season is another matter." The 28-year-old Bulgarian launched a public attack on his Dutch coach in Lisbon, where he attended the presentation of FIFA's world player of the year award to friend and former Barcelona team-mate Romario. "Something has gone wrong between me and the coach," he said. "When we lose I am always the one singled out for blame. When we win, the whole team get the praise."

Chiefs deny Montana had serious knee surgery

KANSAS CITY (AP) — The Kansas City Chiefs on Thursday denied reports that surgery on Joe Montana's knee was more difficult than expected and said he spent the day taking flying lessons. The operation was nothing different than a number of players have following a rugged football season, said Chiefs spokesman Bob Moore. ESPN, a cable television station, reported on Super Bowl Sunday that the surgery was more serious, and that Montana would need a longer recuperation period than was expected. Moore said the report was wrong.

Mota to seal career at Atlanta Olympics

LONDON (R) — Rosa Mota, the most successful women's marathon runner ever, hopes to set the seal on her career with the Olympic title in Atlanta next year at the age of 38. Mota, who has won Olympic and world titles plus three European golds, dropped out of the Tokyo Marathon last November in her first race for 2½ years. But she is now training in Porto in the north of Portugal in preparation for Atlanta under coach and husband Jose Pedroso.

Women's pro baseball league to open

ATLANTA (AFP) — A six-team European women's professional baseball league, backed by organisers of a U.S. women's team, will open June in France, Spain and Italy, officials said here Thursday. The Mediterranean Baseball League will feature players from among 2,500 who tried out for the Colorado Silver Bullets touring U.S. team. U.S. college coaches will instruct teams of 20 players, five of whom will be from the host nation. "People in Europe love sports and love anything that is American."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR KHANF & TAMMAM HIRSHI

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COUP FOR THE QUEEN

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ Q 7 3

♥ A K 6

♦ 6 6 6

♣ A 7 3

EAST

♠ J 9 8

♥ Q 9 8 4

♦ Q 10 5

♣ K 10 5

SOUTH

♠ A K 10 4

♥ 10 7 5 3 2

♦ A 9

♣ 8 2

The bidding:

North East South West

1 ♠ Pass 1 ♥ Pass

2 ♣ Pass 4 ♥ Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: Five of 0

Unless you have reason to believe

you are being sold a bill of goods,

except on the defender's play at

their first move. This hand stood

Bill Goren in good stead on this

hand from a rubber bridge game at

the San Francisco Bridge Club.

We like North's raise to two

hearts, despite the 4-3-3 pattern,

and only three-card support. If you

suppress a holding headed by A K,

you will have difficulty later in

conceding partner of the quality of

your trumps.

Four hearts was an excellent

contract — a laydown if trumps were 3-2

As a matter of technique Goren

ducked the opening diamond lead

and won the continuation with the

ace. Next came another good play —

conceding a club trick to the

defender.

Declarer ruffed the diamond re-

turn, then cashed the king of hearts,

fetching the jack from East. If that

was an honest card, declarer was in

danger of losing two trump tricks

and the contract, unless a coup

could be engineered.

After cashing the ace of clubs,

declarer ruffed a club in hand, then

played off three rounds of spades

ending in dummy. The table's last

club was led and, when East fol-

lowed, declarer simply discarded the

spade from hand. West was forced

to ruff, then had to lead a trump

away from Q 9 into declarer's com-

bined A 10 tenace. Making four-odd.

Cinema	Tel.: 634144	Cinema	Tel.: 699238	Cinema	Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's	Tel.: 625155
PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		AMMOUN THEATRE		Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:15, 10:30		SUM'A in the satirical play		Presents	Presents:
		The movie: THE LION KING will be shown on Fridays and Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.		CONCORD "2"		HI CITIZEN		Abu Awwad	The political satire:
				Tom Hanks ... in		Compounded and directed by		In the social comedy	AL SALAM YA SALAM
				Sleepless in Seattle		Muhammad Al Shawaqfeh		Punctured Bag	at 8:30 p.m.
				Shows: 2:30, 6:00		Daily from 8:30 p.m.		The theatre is closed on	For reservation, please call
						Children's Play		Mondays	625155
						The Ninja Turtles Show		Tickets are available all	The theatre is closed on
						Directed by Akram Abul Ragheb		day	Saturdays & Sundays
						Daily at 10:30 p.m.			

Fred Perry, Britain's last Wimbledon champ, dies at 85

MELBOURNE (AP) — Fred Perry, the last British man to win the Wimbledon singles title, died Thursday at the age of 85.

Perry, who won Wimbledon three straight times from 1934-36, died in hospital in Melbourne, where he was being treated after suffering broken ribs in a fall in his hotel bathroom last week.

A short statement issued Friday by the Epworth Hospital on behalf of Perry's family said he had died of heart failure.

"Mr. Fred Perry passed away suddenly and peacefully from heart failure on Thursday afternoon at the Epworth Hospital," the statement said.

Tributes to Perry flooded in from around the tennis world.

"Fred Perry was a superlative ambassador for our sport throughout the world," All England Club chairman John Curry said in a statement. "He was a great character, big-hearted and a true champion in every sense."

"He won the affection and admiration of all those involved in tennis... Fred was a central figure at the championships for more than 50 years and all those involved in both the club and the championships will retain a lasting and fond memory of him."

"Fred was one of those rare individuals. He was at ease with all — from the youngest fans to royalty." Australia's former Davis Cup captain and Wimbledon champion Neale Fraser described Perry as "a great chap to be around."

"He was always had a smile, always seemed to be happy," said Fraser of his longtime friend.

"I sat with him just a few days ago at the (Australian) Open and now he's gone. It's very sad, but he can rest easily. He did a wonderful job for a great game. He's left his mark."

Before turning professional in 1936, Perry captured eight Grand Slam singles titles. In addition to

his three Wimbledon crowns, Perry won the United States championship at Forest Hills in 1933, 1934 and 1936, the Australian championship in 1934 and the French title in 1935.

Born in Stockport, Cheshire, Perry was regarded as one of the all-time greats of tennis. He was the first player to win all four major titles, although he did not hold them concurrently.

Perry beat Australia's Jack Crawford in 1934 for his first Wimbledon crown and defended the title the following year when he defeated Germany's Baron Gottfried Von Cramm.

In 1936, Perry defeated Von Cramm 6-1, 6-1, 6-0 in 40 minutes in the shortest Wimbledon final this century.

"In those days we had no prize money like they have today," Perry recalled in a recent interview. "When I won Wimbledon, I was given two sugars in my tea instead of one by the Wimbledon committee. We played for pride."

Perry said the achievement he most cherished was Britain's Davis Cup triumph over France in Paris 1933. After beating Henry Cochet, Perry clinched the decisive fifth match with a win over Andre Merlin to bring the trophy to Britain for the first time since 1911.

Perry led Britain to Davis Cup championship with victories over France (1933), the United States (1934-35) and Australia (1936).

He won 45 out of 52 Davis Cup matches for Britain and 34 out of 38 singles between 1931-36.

Perry was renowned as an aggressive competitor with tremendous self-confidence and a remarkable running forehand.

Shortly after his last Wimbledon triumph, Perry moved to the United States to turn professional, angering Wimbledon officials. "I suddenly became persona non grata as far as

tennis was concerned," he said. "It just wasn't done anywhere except the United States to be a pro. I wasn't allowed back to Wimbledon, where my membership was rescinded, or to any other tournament affiliated with a national federation."

The rift was healed in 1984 when Wimbledon erected a statue of Perry near Centre Court. The main entrance next to his bronze figure is known as the Fred Perry Gate.

Perry remained active until his death. He ran a highly successful sportswear company and was a regular member of BBC radio's commentary team at Wimbledon and other major championships from 1949. His annual presence at Wimbledon served as a constant reminder of the sorry state of British tennis, which has no male players in the top 50.

Britain's current No. 1 player Jeremy Bates said Perry would be "sorely missed."

"He would always speak to me in the Wimbledon locker room and there was always a special sensation or aura when he walked into the changing room, which was recognition of what a great man he was," Bates said.

"It was a joy to speak to him and always a special feeling to be in a conversation with him. He always had words of wisdom and encouragement and comments about my matches."

Bates, 32, said he enjoyed Perry's "intelligent and lucid" remarks as a radio commentator. "He was always very much up to date with the modern game," he added.

Perry, however, didn't conceal his distaste for the state of today's game.

"The trouble with tennis nowadays is that there are too many tournaments and too much money on offer to the stars," he said.

"There are simply not enough top-level competitors to go round. Those that there are wear themselves out with too much tennis, too much travelling and too many other exhausting — if lucrative — commitments."

"What concerns me most of all is the racket technology. The technology dictates the way the game is played. I think there's a case for going back to wooden rackets for men because there aren't any touch players any more."

The Lawn Tennis Association, which has sought unsuccessfully to find another British champion, greeted Perry's death with "great sadness."

"His playing record commanded universal respect and his wit and warm personality rightly earned him a special place in the affections of everyone involved in tennis," an LTA statement said. "Fred was a wonderful ambassador for the game and the world of tennis will be a poorer place without him."

International Tennis Federation president Brian Tobin also paid tribute to Perry.

"Until his last moments, Fred was still vitally interested in and enthusiastic about the game he played so well in the 1930s," Tobin said. "Not only was he a great champion he was also a great friend to so many players and national tennis associations over the years. We will all miss him and our sympathies and prayers go out to his wife Bobby and his daughter Penny."

Perry's fourth wife Barbara — known to everyone as "Bobby" — was with him in Melbourne where he had been watching the Australian Open, which finished last Sunday.

His daughter Penny flew into Melbourne on Thursday to be with her father. He also was survived by an adopted son.

Arrangements will be made for Perry's body to be flown home to England for burial. Tennis Australia said a statement. No funeral arrangements have been announced.



French couple Sophie Moniotte and Pascal Lavanchy in action at the European Figure Skating Championships in Dortmund (AFP photo)

Figure Skating Nine triples earn Kulik gold medal

DORTMUND (Agencies) — Ilya Kulik soared to the European Men's Figure Skating title on his first attempt with a sensational display of nine triple jumps on Thursday.

Though two were slightly flawed, the 17-year-old Moscow sports student confirmed the immense promise he showed when he beat a hugely talented field in the short programme on Wednesday.

Kulik, who won the world junior title only two months ago, became only the second skater outside the pairs since World War II to capture a European title on his first attempt.

The first was 1993 champion, Ukraine's Dmitry Dmitrenko, who was seventh on Thursday.

Outstanding though he was, Kulik was surpassed on the night by Olympic champion Alexei Urmanov, his Russian compatriot who leaped from sixth place before the final to snatch the silver medal with a perfect score.

Urmanov, a disappointing fourth at last year's World Championships, skated an exhilarating programme containing eight triple jumps to music from Swan Lake and gleamed the only perfect 6.0 points for artistry awarded in the final.

He had left himself too much to do to take gold but he will be heartened after a series of setbacks since his triumph at the Lillehammer Olympics last year.

Ukrainian Viacheslav Zagorodniuk secured the bronze medal with Frenchman Philippe Candeloro, second in the world last year, fourth after a "Godfather" routine marred by two jumping mistakes.

Those who forecast Kulik might not have the stamina or the experience for the occasion sold him short, though his first jump combination seemed to bear them out. The triple axel was superb

but the triple toe loop combined with it was over-rotated.

He recovered beautifully with a triple lutz landed like a feather and seven more triples flowed from that.

He gained steady marks of 5.8 and 5.7 for both technique and artistry.

After needing time to recover, Kulik said he had thought of becoming champion before he came to Dortmund.

"It was a little idea," a dream in my head," he said. "But mainly I wanted to show what I can do in front of a big audience and prove that I belonged among the top skaters."

He said he hoped for a long career in the sport "I want to skate in the next Olympic games and maybe even the one after that."

Kulik said there was less pressure on him than on Urmanov. "As Olympic champion he had that achievement to live up to."

Urmanov's programme was exquisite. "I think it was the best free programme of my life. Everything was smooth. Everything I tried was almost perfect," he said, adding that the pressure was off him after his sixth place in the short programme.

Urmanov, who beat Kulik for the Russian title last month, also confirmed he has been forced to move to Moscow to train because of the closure of the rink in his home city of St. Petersburg.

He will continue to train there ahead of the World Championships in Birmingham, England, next month. Zagorodniuk said he felt nervous and did not attempt the jump combinations that the others performed.

Candeloro, his hair sprayed grey for his portrayal of the old godfather, ruined his triple lutz with a two-footed, off balance landing. He suffered the same fate on a triple flip later in the routine.

Skating too much on thin ice

Overexposure is a problem that the International Skating Union must face, but it has nothing to do with the costumes that some skaters wear.

Critics say the number of pro competitions and shows that have come on the scene over the past year are lessening the competitive angle of the sport.

"It's a very personal opinion but there is too much exposure," said Lawrence Demmy, a vice-president of the ISU.

"There were the incredible ratings of the skating because of the Kerrigan-hardy incident," Demmy said.

"It's very sad that to make skating popular we needed someone to beat up another one," said Carlo Fassi, who coached Olympic champions Peggy Fleming, Dorothy Hamill and the late John Curry.

"This is another world now. It's very good for skating," Fassi said. "But they are overexposing it."

The popularity has brought so many competitions among the Olympic medalists that nearly every week there is some kind of pro-event.

Over the past few months there has been the "International Figure Skating competition," "The world professional skating championships," "challenge of champions" and "world team skating championship."

All this in addition to the World Championship in Birmingham, which is the only one the ISU recognizes to determine the real world champions.

Demmy understands the reasons for the TV interest. "The television networks had the loss of the NFL and the baseball lockout," Demmy said. "And TV had to fill that space."

The entrepreneurs rushed in to take advantage of it and competitions sprouted over the past year.

"I hope very soon all of them get together and have just one competition," Fassi said.

But the ISU doesn't recognize them all.

The ISU is ruling skaters ineligible who compete in unsanctioned events — nearly every one of the TV competitions.

"The ISU has sanctioned three open competitions — one in Canada, one in Philadelphia and another in March in Los Angeles," Demmy said.

But he said there may be more ISU-approved competitions next year.

"Every application for open competition will be considered," Demmy said.

The increase in money to be earned has moved the stars of today into the pro ranks, perhaps too prematurely.

The skaters who were reinstated for last year's Olympics and returned to the professional ranks, such as Katarina Witt and Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean, would not be reinstated again.

Oksana Baiul, the Olympic champion over Kerrigan at Lillehammer, is taking the year off. Although she's just 17, she may be more than \$2 million richer by April 1, the deadline to ask for reinstatement.

Demmy anticipates that Baiul will make an application for reinstatement.

"At the ISU Council meeting in May in Athens we will review all the applications for reinstatement," Demmy said.

But Fassi sees another problem Baiul will face if she comes back to ISU events.

"I saw her in the last competitions and she was just doing a triple Salchow and maybe a triple toe loop," Fassi said. "Those are two of the five easier jumps compared to the five difficult ones she did at the Olympics."

Bertrand all wet in America's Cup

SAN DIEGO (AFP) — OneAustralia skipper John Bertrand swam with the whales Thursday but did not enjoy the experience.

Bertrand fell overboard here Thursday as his boat lost a light-wind race to unbeaten Team New Zealand in the second round of the Louis Vuitton Cup challenger trials for the America's Cup.

Bertrand, 47, was embarrassed but not harmed. The man who sailed Alan Bond's Australia II to victory over Dennis Conner's Liberty in 1983 to take the Cup Down Under was in the 58-degree water for about 12 seconds.

Light winds continued to plague the event. The races were delayed by almost two hours as overhead television cameras showed California gray whales migrating through the race course.

When racing began, the Australians trailed Peter Blake's "Black Magic" by only two boat lengths at the first leeward mark.

They were starting to drop their spinnaker when Bertrand moved toward the port side of the middle of the boat. Then he appeared to lose his balance and landed in the water feet first.

Bertrand grabbed a line as he fell and lost his cap, but bled on as the boat went past.

Schumacher and team set high goals for 1995

PONZANO VENETO, Italy (AP) — World champion Michael Schumacher and his Benetton team have set high goals for the 1995 Formula One season — winning both the drivers and makers titles.

"We have the potential for shooting a double this year," the German driver said at the unveiling of the brand-new Benetton-Renault car, designed to give him his second consecutive triumph in the yearly auto racing competition.

"I want to say it loudly. Our goal is to stay at the top and win both the world manufacturers and drivers titles this year," team manager Flavio Briatore echoed.

Schumacher, who won the 1994 title following a last-race duel with Williams-Renault Driver Damon Hill, said he expected to face the toughest competition from the English driver and the Williams team again this year.

"In my view, Williams is the team to beat, the team we must watch out. I can't say if winning the (drivers) title will be more difficult than last year. I had a lot of problems in 1994. For sure it will be difficult to stay in front throughout the season," said Schumacher, the first German driver to win a World-F-1 title.

While losing the 1994 drivers title, Williams-Renault still won the World makers championship for the third year in a row.

Benetton, an Italian-British team which is named after the Benetton textile group, will use Renault engines for the first time this year, after parting with U.S. Ford.

The French engine maker is also the official supplier of Williams, Benetton's rival team.

"It's a great challenge to supply two top F-1 teams," said Patrick Faure, Renault's general director, addressing a news conference at Benetton headquarters in this northern town, near Venice.

Schumacher will team at Benetton-Renault with Britain's Johnny Herbert, who is

rejoining the Italian-British team now that he has fully recovered from serious leg and ankle injuries which put his racing career at risk back in 1988.

"It's a great opportunity to drive with Benetton again. I'm fit, and the engine looks very good. I have high hopes," Herbert said.

The world F-1 championships circuit is scheduled to begin Latin America on March 12.

Schumacher said Benetton's recent engine tests were rained out in Silverstone.

"I will have clearer ideas (about the new car) following the next tests in Jerez (Spain). We will have to adapt a little bit to the new car, although I believe that new regulations will not affect driving style," the German driver said.

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